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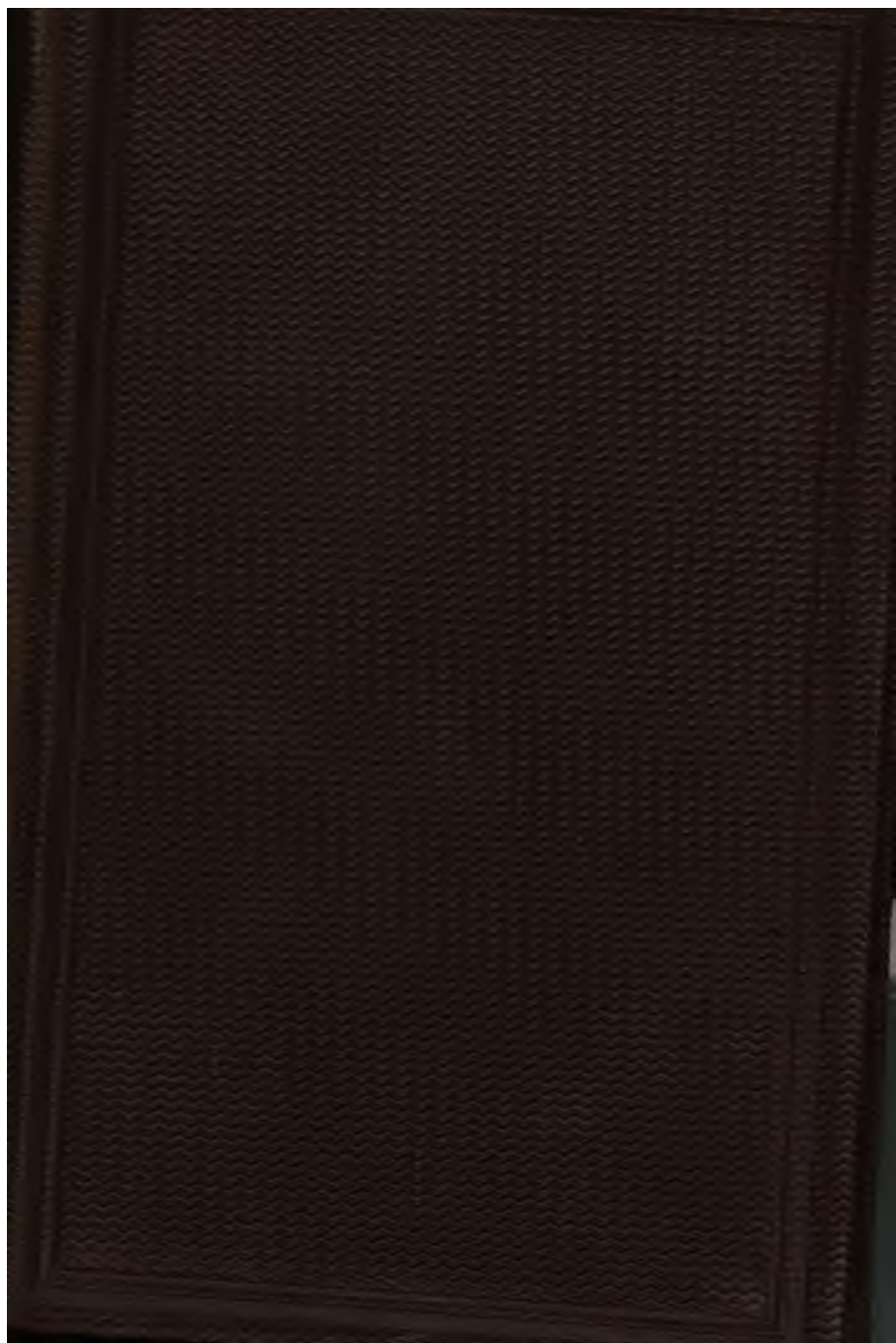
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AN OUTLINE  
OF THE  
ELEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,  
FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS.

BY N. G. CLARK,  
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH LITERATURE IN UNION COLLEGE.

NEW YORK:  
CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.  
1863.



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STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY H. O. HOUGHTON.

## PREFACE.

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THE work here offered to the public has been prepared with special reference to the wants of students beginning a course of studies in English literature. It is the substance of lectures given in the University of Vermont during the last five or six years, with such additional suggestions and material as have been derived from larger works recently published on the same or kindred subjects.

The time devoted to the study of the English language and literature in the college course forbids anything more than a mere outline of the elements,—an introduction rather than an exhaustive discussion. The most that can be done is to map out the field it occupies, to show its general bearings and relations to other departments of knowledge, and if possible to lay down principles which may serve as the basis of future more careful and extended inquiry.

One reason for adding another to the many volumes on this subject already published and competing for public favor, will be found in the method adopted, which aims to bring out more fully than has hitherto been done, so far as I know, the vital connection between the language and the physical and intellectual elements of English character. With this purpose, it has been judged best to consider the language alone, or with only such reference to its literature as should be strictly necessary to a clear understanding of the matter in hand. Though the work has been prepared primarily for the use of students, this method may serve to give it an interest to the general reader.

Another reason is to prepare the way to consider the literature of our language in a similar method,—in its elements of thought, and as the expression of the course of English thought at different periods, and of the various changes and modifications to which it has been subjected. It is believed that the time is not far distant, when the scientific methods so generally introduced into the discussion of other subjects may be applied here with advantage, and literature cease to be a mere aggregate of written productions, and attain

.

## PREFACE.

▼

to something of the order of Science. At the least it may be worth our while to be working in that direction.

The more important works consulted in the preparation of these pages, have been referred to in foot-notes, and occasionally in the text for a more full notice of the topics alluded to. These references will enable the student to follow out his investigations to almost any extent. More special reference is due to the invaluable works of Marsh, Craik, Max Müller, and Trench, to all of which it is hoped that this volume may serve as an introduction. As the works of Craik have not yet been republished in this country, and are not therefore accessible to students generally, greater use has been made of his investigations. It was my design at first to republish his "Outlines of the History of the English Language" with some notes and additions, but the difficulty experienced in determining what to reject and what to add, led me to give it up, with the exception of his "Illustrative Specimens" which are here reprinted with the addition of as many more. Some of the latter are due to the politeness of Mr. Sibley, the obliging Librarian of Harvard College, who allowed me, during the

few days I had at command, the free use of a very rich collection of old English works, the very sight of which almost filled me with despair of my attempt.

The specimens are given as *illustrative*, and to be made such, they must be studied in connection with the body of the work.

N. G. C.

UNION COLLEGE, SCHENECTADY, N. Y., }  
May 25, 1863. }

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**AN OUTLINE**  
**OF THE**  
**ELEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.**

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**CHAPTER I.**

**CELTIC AND ROMAN ELEMENTS.**

Object of the Work — Physical and Intellectual Elements of the English Character and Language — The Aryan Family of Languages — Division — Period of Migration of the Different Races — The Old British or Celts — Place — Contests with Rome — Adoption of Christianity — Struggle with the Saxons — Character — Influence on the English Mind — Love of Poetry — The Irish Branch — The Scotch — Welsh — Triads — Mabinogi — Celtic Language unmixed with Latin or Saxon — Celtic Words in English — Roman Period — Influence of the Romans — Traces of their Language and Civilization.

It is the object of this work to present the elements of the English language in their relation to the physical and intellectual elements of English character. The language has been modified and determined by all the influences that have entered into, and affected the habits of life and thought of the people who have used it. It owes a part of its character to race, a part to the physical relations of the countries where it originated and over which it has spread, and a part to the intellectual



and moral ideas it has embodied, whether of home or of foreign source. In the order of nature as of time, the first thing to be considered is the element of race.

The family of languages to which the English, in its various elements, belongs, has borne various names,—as Indo-Germanic, Indo-European, and Aryan. The first two indicate the relationship existing between the languages of Europe and of India; the last refers to the original seat of the family, Arya, or the northern portion of modern Persia. From this central point successive migrations of the Aryan family were made to the south-east into India, and westward over Europe, till at length the Aryan family of languages prevailed, from the Ganges on the east, to the British Isles on the west,—from the peninsulas of the Mediterranean to the region of the frozen north. As the different tribes left the common seat, they bore away from the common stock the staple roots of the language, and developed from them new words to suit the scenes through which they passed, or the countries they made their home. The effects of climate, of occupation, of different degrees and opportunities of culture, soon became expressed in language, still plastic to every influence, till fixed in definite forms by the use of letters and a popular literature. Thus the original language of the Aryan race assumed different forms and bore different names, according to its locality and the manifold influences affecting those who used it.

The following division is that usually adopted by grammarians: the Sanscrit in India, where it is still preserved in the sacred books of the native population, and is honored as the oldest daughter of the family; the Celtic, traces of which are still to be found in the

British Isles ; the Greek and the Latin, perhaps subdivisions of one branch at some pre-historic period ; the Gothic, or as it is sometimes called, the Teutonic or Germanic, the language of the various German tribes ; and the Slavonic or Windic, with its subdivisions of the Lettic, the original language of Lithuania and a part of Prussia, and the proper Slavonic, the language of Russia, and of a portion of the different peoples subject to Austria.

At the present stage of inquiry, it is impossible to fix with any degree of precision upon the time when the different tribes, represented by so many different dialects or languages, first became established in Europe. It is only within the present century, and as one of the triumphs of philological study, that the affinity of these so widely-scattered and so dissimilar tribes has been recognized ; many important questions still wait a decision, and many conclusions, now deemed certain, may be modified by more extended or careful investigation. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to give only the main outlines, on which there is a general agreement.

For a more detailed statement see "Max Müller's Survey of Languages," "Dwight's Modern Philology," "Harrison on the English Language."

### *The Old British or Celtic Element.*

The Celtic tribes once occupied a large share of western Europe, including northern Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Gaul, and the British Isles. They are supposed to have entered Europe as early at least as the twelfth century, B. C., and perhaps earlier. In the days of their prosperity they threatened the destruction of Grecian and

Roman civilization. One of their roving hordes settled down in a part of Asia Minor, which afterwards bore the name Galatia. After a desperate struggle, their power was broken by the Roman arms, first in Gaul and afterwards in Britain, in the century before the Christian era. On the Continent they seem to have submitted to the language and institutions of their conquerors, and ere-long to have become blended with them. At a later period they mingled their blood and their intellectual characteristics with the German tribes that successively overran their country, and lastly with the Northmen,—the future conquerors of England.

In Britain, though they adopted Christianity and many institutions of social life from the Romans, they never became blended with them. The Romans held the country by an army of occupation, and when they withdrew, the country they had occupied fell a prey to the Saxons. The Britons, however, did not submit without a long and obstinate contest, commemorated in after-days through the patriotic legends of Arthur, one of their gallant leaders, and his no less gallant companions of the Round Table. A few maintained their independence, amid the fastnesses of Wales, down to the thirteenth century. Remnants, also, of this once widely-scattered people are still to be found among the native population of Brittany, Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland, where, in the modern Erse, or Gaelic, the original language of the Celts is still in some measure preserved.

The Celts were quite unlike the other peoples with whom they came in contact, both in spirit and in language. They possessed a lively imagination, and an ardent temperament, but they were deficient in steadiness of purpose and persistent will. They lacked the enter-

prise and the hardihood both of the Romans and the Germans, and were consequently obliged to give way to both. Their peculiar traits of character have been manifested in their preference for the forms and ceremonial of the Romish religion to the simpler rites of Protestant Christianity ; in their passion for arms, pomp, and display generally ; in the gallantry and dash that characterize the French, Irish, and the Scotch Highlander, as contrasted with the obstinate endurance of the English soldier ; — and for the imaginative element they have contributed to English literature, to its oratory, and its poetry. If we were to strike from the records of English literature and arms the names of men of Celtic blood, it would be at the sacrifice of many of those most honored for their heroism, and most highly esteemed for their influence upon the English mind. From this point of view the Celtic population of the British Isles is worthy of no common regard. The bitter animosity of rival races during the earlier history of the English language, in its formation period, prevented the interchange of the forms of speech, but has not prevented in later times the commingling of blood, — of the warm blood and lively imagination of the Celt with the solidity and the soberer virtues of the Saxon.

Thierry<sup>1</sup> says of the ancient Britons, or Celts, that they lived on poesy. The expression is not too strong. In their political axioms which are still preserved, they place the bard by the side of the agriculturist and the artisan, as one of the pillars of social life. Their bards had but one theme, — the destiny of their country, its misfortunes and its hopes. The nation, poetic in its turn, eagerly caught up their fictions, and gave the most fanci-

<sup>1</sup> *Conquête de l'Angleterre*, vol. i. p. 103.

ful meanings to the simplest words. The longings of the bard became promises of the future, and, cheered by his prophecies, they endured present distress as a transient evil, waiting the time when they should recover their lost possessions and rights to the soil.

As they never possessed letters, but rather despised them till a late period, they had no way of preserving their laws, history, and popular songs, save as they were handed down from one generation to another by their poets. Hence the very scanty knowledge we possess of their manners, usages, and literature, and the little influence they have exerted on subsequent times, except by the commingling of their blood.

The Irish branch is the most remarkable for its literary treasures. These are said to consist of legends, prose chronicles, and the songs of their bards. The earliest relics of the Celtic literature of Scotland are in metre, but of less value, despite the efforts of Macpherson and others to invest them with a mythical glory. The Welsh bards have a claim on our admiration as the champions and martyrs of national independence. The singular pieces called the "Triads" present us, regularly disposed in groups of three, a collection of historical facts, ethical and legal maxims, and a variety of traditional lore. But a few only of their metrical productions can be referred to a period earlier than the sixth century. The most belong to the later days of their independence, and commemorate the calamities of their race. Their *Mabinogi*, or "Tales of Youth," were a worthy contribution to the Romance literature of the Middle Ages, resting upon the traditions of a rude and early generation.<sup>1</sup> But it was by other works, and especially by the legends of


<sup>1</sup> Spalding's *English Literature*, pp. 31, 32.

Merlin and Arthur, that the Celtic imagination was to exert the greatest influence upon the literature of Europe during successive centuries,—an influence felt to the present time.

It is not strange that a people so radically distinct in spirit and character should have had so little affinity with the stern practical spirit of the Romans, and later, of the Saxon race. The grammatical forms of these languages were never interchanged, and but comparatively few words from their vocabularies. And these few were commonly such names of objects as were new to the respective languages that adopted them.

The difference in the character of the Celts from their neighbors was expressed in no less marked differences of language. Its system of inflections was much more fully developed than the Saxon. The moods and tenses of the verb were marked by peculiar inflections, with little if any dependence on auxiliary verbs. There was a great variety of forms to their pronouns to express the greatest number of relations. Add to this a flexibility in the change of consonants to form new combinations of words, and it is obvious that so highly complicated a language must have served as a great barrier to intercourse with their neighbors. In view, then, of the character and language of the Celts, we need not be surprised at the little influence they exerted, save in the particular directions already indicated. Their influence upon the English language directly, with the exception of adding a few words to its vocabulary, was really nothing.

The words of Celtic origin now in use are mainly confined to names of places and to a few physical objects. The old British word *dun*, a rock, changed to *don*, in the termination of many English and American names



of towns and cities, recalls that rude state of society, when the fortress upon the rock or the beetling crag furnished the only security for life or possessions. It is the conclusion of some of the best writers on the subject that the oldest topographical nomenclature in Britain is Celtic.<sup>1</sup> Inquirers are by no means agreed as to the number of words on other subjects, some reckoning them by hundreds and even thousands, while others would reduce them to a comparatively small number. Among those commonly cited as of Celtic origin are the following: *basket, barrow, button, cart, crook, gown, pan, solder, wain*; all of which Mr. Marsh has shown to be derived from other sources, or at least to have a common existence in other languages. "The probability is that most of the words in question belong to an earlier period of human speech than that of the existence of any language identifiable as distinctly Celtic, Gothic, or Italic."<sup>2</sup>

### *The Roman Element.*

The term Roman is here used to mark the influence exerted on the English character and language by the Roman occupation of Britain for five centuries, as distinguished from that of the Latin language and literature of a later date. The period under review begins with the invasion of Julius Cæsar, 55 B.C. and closes with the year 449 A.D., the year of the first German immigration into the Island, though the Roman dominion ceased to be acknowledged as early as the year 409 A.D.

The influence of the Romans upon the language and

<sup>1</sup> Craik's *Outlines of the History of the English Language*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Series of Lectures*, p. 86.

character of the subsequent periods of English history was no greater than that of the original Celtic population. No Breto-Roman dialect was ever developed akin to the Romance languages of the Continent. The language of the Romans disappeared with their legions, or was immediately supplanted by that of the Saxon invaders. And though we must suppose some degree of Roman civilization to have been obtained during this long period, yet we have no certain information as to the prevalence of the Latin language. Whatever Roman colonists may have settled in the country were probably soon lost in the surrounding population. The only traces of the Roman dominion surviving in the language are found in the names of places, — as the terminations *chester*, *cester*, in *Dorchester*, *Leicester*, from *castra*, a camp; and *coln* in *Lincoln*, from *colonia* — terms revealing the very superficial character of Roman influence upon the country. The vital organizing force of the Roman character was wellnigh lost. Yet we should not be in haste to say that we have received no advantage from the sway of the Romans in England. The arts and the civilization of Rome ever followed in the train of her armies, and the Britons were no exception to their influence, notwithstanding the hatred of race, and unlikeness of language and character. Whatever of civilization was attained was not lost upon men of so intensely practical a spirit as our Saxon ancestors, and could not have failed to secure in them the earlier adoption of the settled order and habits of civilized life.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE ANGLO-SAXON OR GOTHIC ELEMENT.

Course of Gothic Migrations — Different Branches of the Gothic Family — Modern English — Different Saxon Tribes represented among the Saxon Conquerors of England — Dialects in England — Saxons embrace Christianity — Character — Change in this respect — Homogeneousness of Language — Relation to High and Low German — Vulgar Language — Saxon — Use of the Terms England and English — Opinions of Craik and Marsh — Degree of Development of the Anglo-Saxon Language — Literature in their Pagan State — Songs — After the Adoption of Christianity — Bede — Alcuin — From Bede to Alfred — Anglo-Saxon Literature different from that of other Nations — The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle — Verse — Beowulf — Cædmon — Longfellow's Judgment — Saxon Prose — Alfred.

THE different tribes that, under the name of Saxons, Jutes, or Angles, overrun the most of South Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, belonged to the great Gothic family of nations. They are supposed to have entered Europe to the north of the Black Sea, and following the course of the Danube, to have taken possession of the countries drained by its waters and the region adjacent to the Baltic and the North Seas, including the Scandinavian peninsula. This family was early divided into three great divisions: the High German in the southern portion, represented in

the present language of Germany; Low German in the north, on the lowlands about the Elbe and on the North Sea, represented in the modern Dutch and the old Saxon; and the Scandinavian, best known in the Scandinavian peninsula and in Iceland. Modern English is the result of a fusion of the various dialects of the Low German with the incorporation of some foreign elements, as the Celtic and the Latin.

Much as in later times with the colored races on the coast of Guinea, a number of small tribes or fragments of tribes were crowded about the mouth of the Elbe, and into the low grounds of what is now known as Holland, Northern Hanover, and Denmark. Traces of these are manifest in the great number of dialects that still prevail in that neighborhood and in the evidently composite character of the so-called Anglo-Saxon language of Britain. It is possible that the dialectic peculiarities noticeable in different parts of England to this day may in part be due to the same source.<sup>1</sup> Wellnigh driven into the sea by their more powerful neighbors, they had learned to make use of it as a means of securing a subsistence, and developed a spirit of enterprise and daring that prepared them for the conquest of Britain. The acknowledged presence of the Jutes would lead us to expect adventurers from Scandinavia as well as other German tribes, attracted by the hope of plunder or of bettering their condition. The Britons were either driven away or exterminated. The invaders introduced a new language, new institutions, and a new religion;

<sup>1</sup> NOTE. — The stranger, in merely going from Liverpool to London, if he takes one of the cheap accommodation trains, will not fail to observe a great difference of dialect in the different sections through which he passes.

and though they embraced Christianity about the close of the sixth century, they accepted it not from the former occupants of the soil, but from missionaries sent among them from Rome.

Some of the same elements of character that have been displayed in their descendants on both hemispheres are worthy of note: the enterprise and daring that shrink at no obstacles, physical or moral, in the way of their progress or aggrandizement, and the love of law and order at home,—at once aggressive and conservative. These two elements are the prime constituents of the foreign and domestic policy of the Saxon race.

Yet the invaders seem soon to have settled down to the quiet enjoyment of their new homes, and to have relapsed into an inglorious ease, greatly in contrast with their earlier character. The general inactivity and ignorance that prevailed at the opening of Alfred's career are very remarkable, and furnish little occasion of glorying in our Anglo-Saxon ancestry. The new life he awakened soon passed away. His people submitted first to their kinsmen, the Danes, and later to the Normans, who were destined to infuse new life and activity into the Saxon character, and by the infusion of their blood and intellectual traits to give rise to a new nationality.<sup>1</sup>

However great the number of dialects among the original invaders of England, their language soon attained a fair degree of homogeneousness, yet never sufficiently so to conceal the diversity of its origin. This appears in the variations of inflection and orthography to be observed in different writers and in the same writer at different times. "Its syntax is irregular and

<sup>1</sup> See Marsh, Third Lecture, Second Series.

discrepant; and though both its grammar and its vocabulary connect it most nearly with the low or *Plat-Deutsch* branch of the German, yet it has grammatical forms as well as verbal combinations and vocables which indicate now a relationship to High German, and now to Scandinavian, not to speak of Celtic roots which it may have borrowed from the Britons, or may have received, at an earlier period, from the ancient fountain of Indo-European speech whence the Celtic and the Gothic as well as the Romance and Hellenic languages of Europe are theoretically considered to have flowed. In short the Anglo-Saxon was much such a language as it might be supposed would result from a fusion of the old Saxon with smaller proportions of High German, Scandinavian, and even Celtic and Slavonic elements; and it bears nearly the same relation to those ingredients that modern English bears to its own constituents, though indeed no single influence was exerted upon it so disturbing in character as the Norman French has proved to our present tongue.”<sup>1</sup>

These peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon language show plainly enough the diversity of origin among those that finally united in using it. In the want of any trustworthy historical proof, the attempt has been made to determine the precise locality of the several tribes from the several dialects still existing, but the results are not altogether satisfactory. It is probable, however, that some remnants of the original language may still be found the least changed among the peasantry in some of the rural districts of England. Devoted to agricultural pursuits, having till recently but little communication with other parts of the country, strongly conservative in their feelings and habits, they would naturally preserve more of the ancient idiom

<sup>1</sup>Marsh, Second Series, p. 55.

in their ordinary home-speech. What is sometimes called vulgar language — the terms and phrases in use among our poor and less educated classes — claims our respect from its more direct descent from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and from its power of expression. It has been remarked by Bosworth,<sup>1</sup> that in every province of England “some streamlets flow down from the fountain-head, retaining their original purity and flavor, though not now relished by fastidious palates.” And it is from these sources that of late years many choice terms have been revived, adding to the freshness and force of the language now in use.

The terms England and English do not appear to have been employed to designate the country and the people or language till some time in the ninth century, and then to have been first used by foreigners. Though Alfred and some other writers of the time call their language English, it seems wiser to retain the name Anglo-Saxon, and to apply the name English to the language now in use. The languages are neither the same in syntax, nor in their vocabularies; nor are the English strictly speaking of the same blood as the men who used the Anglo-Saxon, but have a blood, a character, and a language, the result of the commingling of different tribes and different languages.

Of the two best writers on the early history of the language and literature, Craik and Marsh, the latter adheres to the usual designations, Anglo-Saxon for the earlier period, and English for the later; but Craik, singularly enough after what would seem conclusive proof for agreeing with Marsh, uses the term English throughout. “As the case stands, the English of the

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Dictionary.*

ninth century is one language, and the English of the nineteenth century another. They differ at least as much as the Italian differs from the Latin or as English differs from the German. The most familiar acquaintance with the one leaves the other unintelligible. . . . The one may have grown out of the other, and no doubt has done so at least in part or in the main; but in fact also the modern language is of quite distinct stock from the ancient. Of English literature and the English language, commonly so called, the language and literature of the Angles and Saxons before the twelfth century make no proper part.”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever may have been the nature and capabilities of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, as regards derivation and composition, and the expression of the most varied forms of thought, yet it is certain that these capabilities were never developed. It is a dead language, and, unlike the classic languages of Greece and Rome, is too rude, too fragmentary, too irregular to be revived. “It is intelligible, and that is all. What is written in it can in a certain sense be read, but not so as to bring out any artistic element, except of the most dubious and unsatisfactory kind. If it is not literally dumb, its voice has, for us of the present day, entirely lost its music. When it can be distinguished from prose at all, it is only by certain marks or characteristics which may indeed be perceived by the eye, or counted on the fingers, but which have no expression that excites in us any mental emotion. In respect of everything else appertaining to the soul of the language, our understanding of it is about equally imperfect. The consequence is that, although it can be translated, it

<sup>1</sup> Craik's *History of the English Language and Literature*, vol. i. pp. 36, 37.

cannot be written. And as to translations from this language into modern English verse, nobody can say, except in reference to palpable points of right or wrong in grammar, whether they are well or ill done. The language, though so far in our hands as to admit of being analyzed in grammars, and packed up in dictionaries, is not recoverable in such a degree as to make it possible to pronounce with certainty whether anything written in it is artistically good or bad.”<sup>1</sup>

The literature of the Anglo-Saxons has had almost no influence upon subsequent times,—none whatever, it may safely be said, upon the course of English thought, or as an element in it,—unless it be proved that Milton was indebted to Cædmon for some suggestions in the rough which he developed in the “Paradise Lost.” But there is really no more agreement here than what the subject would naturally occasion in poetic minds.

But little as has been the influence of this literature, and crude as are most of the conceptions of all the leading questions of life, government, morals, social order, or religion, and worthless as are the views expressed in science or history, we may still regard it with something of reverence, as the record of the thoughts and feelings of a brave and noble-hearted people. The fragments that have come down to us are really typical, after all, of the measure of intellectual life attained.

Of the literary compositions of the Anglo-Saxons in their Pagan state we know very little. The Germans had their songs, and it is to be supposed that the Saxons were not behind other tribes. In fact, we find Edgar, one of their kings, after the introduction of Christianity, prohibiting the use of heathen songs at festivals. From

<sup>1</sup> Craik, Abridged.

the admittance of heathen traditions in their earlier professed Christian poems, we may fairly conclude that the old Saxon gleemen sung the deeds of heroes, victorious odes, and death-songs, much like other minstrels of barbarous periods.

It is usual, however, to connect the rise of Anglo-Saxon literature, with the introduction of Christianity, about the close of the sixth century. Literature was chiefly cultivated by the religious orders, using for this purpose the Latin rather than the native language. Thus two literatures may be said to have grown up together, — a learned literature in Latin, addressed to the learned, lay and ecclesiastical, both at home and abroad, which contains the theology and ecclesiastical history of the time; and a national, popular literature, entirely in the popular tongue. The learned literature was worthily represented by Bede, — usually called the “venerable Bede,” — still valued for his ecclesiastical and other historical matter, who flourished at the beginning of the eighth century; and by Adhelm and Alcuin, though the latter, after receiving his education at York, wrote and lived under the dominion of Charlemagne. To Alcuin, Guizot bears the following testimony: “In him, at length, commenced the alliance of those two elements of which the modern mind had so long borne the incoherent impress, — antiquity and the church, — the admiration, the taste, the regret, shall I call it, for Pagan literature, and the sincerity of Christian faith, the zeal to sound its mysteries, and to defend its power.”<sup>1</sup> It is certainly to be regretted that these really eminent classical scholars and men of real ability did not devote their energies to developing the powers of their native tongue, like

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization of France*, vol. iii. p. 54. (Am. edition.)



Dante and Chaucer, of a later day, in their respective languages.

For the next century and a half, or from the age of Bede to that of Alfred, the latter portion of the ninth century, we find little evidence of anything worthy the name of erudition; and Alfred had to undertake a task almost like that of instructing a wholly ignorant people. His practical mind, however, was by no means restricted to his Latin studies, and it is as a Saxon scholar, faithful to his native tongue, and untiring in his use of it to promote the welfare of his people, that he is most deserving of notice.

The native literature of the Anglo-Saxons differs in many respects from that of other nations. They paid little regard to early legends or traditions. They cannot be said to have had any historical literature at all, save dry chronological records of some few of the more important facts of their history, — nothing fitted to give us an adequate notion of their modes of life, habits, and usages. Pauli<sup>1</sup> is of the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon chronicles were first begun under Alfred, and that their reckoning began soon after A. D. 890. They were composed on the Latin model, and were made up of materials of all kinds. They were originated at a time when Alfred and his contemporaries were endeavoring to improve their native language. There is in them little or nothing of the merely fanciful or imaginative, that characterizes so much of the early literature of other nations, but a remarkable adherence to fact, — to matters of practical concern, — to the prose, rather than to the poetry of life. Such imagination as there is, however, is put to a truer use, and is made to serve the practical interests of truth. The

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Alfred*, p. 6. (Bohn Library.)

Anglo-Saxon writers preferred to poetize moral and religious maxims or doctrines, and practical information for the benefit of their fellow-men. This was due in part, of course, to the fact that the literature, such as it was, was cultivated by men devoted to the interests of the Church. Hence their paraphrases of the Scripture, their homilies, and, later, their version of the four Gospels, in the native tongue.

Anglo-Saxon verse is usually made up of short exclamatory lines, whose rhythm theoretically depends on alliteration and accent of the more important words and syllables, while the omission of particles tends to give it vivacity and energy. Other peculiarities of style are the ellipses, the inversions, bold transitions, abundant and often obscure metaphors. These features are not peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons, but are derived from their Continental ancestors.

The poems referring to the earlier or heathen times remained unwritten, and were handed down in popular song, till the time of Alfred. These fragments, for the most part, belonged to the great epic cycle, which was the common property of the Germanic races. And it is probable that most of the vague accounts of the deeds of their famous men had also been sung by the wandering Scalds of the north. The origin of the Christian Anglo-Saxon poetry, on the contrary, belongs to the age of Alfred, and is due to his influence upon the thought and sentiment of his people.<sup>1</sup> The principal historical poem, *Beowulf*, belongs to a period prior to the invasion of England, and is supposed to be of Scandinavian origin, partly because of its allusions and resemblance to the Norse-Sagas, and partly because of its unlikeness to the

<sup>1</sup> Pauli's *Alfred*, p. 166.

general tone and spirit of recognized Anglo-Saxon productions.<sup>1</sup> The only other long work in verse is the metrical paraphrase of Scripture history, by Caedmon, recorded by Bede to have lived in the seventh century ; but the work is said by Craik to be merely a collection of separate Scripture narratives, "mostly paraphrased from the book of Genesis, possibly by various writers, and certainly of much later date." A few other smaller pieces are extant, not deficient in spirit and vigor of expression, as the song on Athelstan's victory at Brunanburgh, and the poem on the fall of Byrthnoth, at Malden, in battle against the Danes. But most of the smaller poems are on religious subjects,—metrical lines of the saints, prayers, hymns, allegories, and paraphrases of Scripture. The following notice of Caedmon, by Longfellow, will illustrate somewhat his thought and method of treating character : "The author is a pious, prayerful monk,—an awful, reverend, and religious man. He has all the simplicity of a child. He calls his Creator, the Blythe Heart King ; the patriarchs, Earls ; and their children, noblemen. Abraham is a wise-heedy, a guardian of bracelets, a mighty Earl ; and his wife Sarah, a woman of elfin beauty. The sons of Reuben are called seapirates ; the Ethiopians, a people brown with the hot coals of heaven. Striking poetic epithets and passages are not wanting, sprinkled here and there through the narrative. The sky is called the roof of nations, the roof adorned with stars. Whenever the author has a battle to describe, and hosts of arm-bearing and way-faring men draw from their sheaths the ring-hilted swords of doughty edges, he enters into the matter with so much spirit, that one can almost see, looking from under the

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.

monkish cowl, the visage of no parish priest, but of a grim war-wolf, as the brave were called when Caedmon wrote.”<sup>1</sup>

There were but few original compositions in Saxon prose, — and but little of any kind till the age of Alfred, and as the result of his efforts and example. Most of the prose works in the native tongue were translations from the Latin, in which the translators freely inserted matter of their own, as Alfred in his translation of “Boethius on the Consolations of Philosophy.” If a passage of his author suggested an example for illustration or an apt train of reflection, it was at once added to the original or substituted for it. The last chapter is entirely of his own composition; and many of his additions do honor to his head and heart. Among other works he translated the ecclesiastical history of Bede, and the ancient history of Orosius. But his efforts, noble as they were, were put forth too late to awaken a true national spirit and so give birth to a national literature.

See the third volume of Sharon Turner’s “History of the Anglo-Saxons,” for a detailed notice of Alfred’s services to literature.

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow, *Poets and Poetry of Europe*, p. 5.

## CHAPTER III.

## ANGLO-SAXON ELEMENT CONTINUED. — LANGUAGE.

Capabilities of the Language — Moral and Metaphysical Terms — Substitution of Latin Roots for Saxon — Anglo-Saxon Inflections — Pronunciation — Orthography — Parts of Speech — Inflection of Pronouns — Verbs — Government — Economy of Expression — Tendency to reject Inflections in passing over into English — Simple forms in use by the Poets — Words formed with the least expense of Sound — Words derived from the Anglo-Saxon — Anglo-Saxon Terminations — Adjectives — Nouns — Verbs — Parts of Speech — Words considered with reference to their Meaning — Generic and Particular — Number of Words of Anglo-Saxon Origin — M. Thommerel — In Common Use — Words used by different Authors — “The Ormulum” — Shakspeare — Milton — Marsh’s Estimates — Words suited to Subject-Matter — Old Words Revived — References.

BUT it is not the literature of the Anglo-Saxons that needs to be considered, in this brief survey, farther than as indicative to some extent of their character. Modern English literature has derived from it nothing of value save a portion of its vocabulary. Some of its most valuable words for the expression of moral and religious ideas have become obsolete, — supplanted by terms borrowed from the Latin, and introduced through the church. The language was not originally deficient in words for the expression of all ideas necessary to the

most complete intellectual and moral culture. Turner has enumerated no less than sixty words originally derived from native roots, expressive of intellectual and moral conceptions; and Marsh<sup>1</sup> remarks that there are besides these a great number of other equally fertile radicals belonging to the same department of the vocabulary, and that it would be difficult to find in any language a term indicative of moral state or emotion or of intellectual action or perception, — excepting of course the artificial terms belonging to the technical dialect of metaphysics, — which is not at least approximatively represented in the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. This is certainly remarkable, and reveals the richness and native power of the language, all the greater from the commingling of so many different tribes; and renews our regret that it was never developed by the hand of a great master. It would then have maintained its independence more firmly against encroachment from abroad, and would have come down to us, richer in terms charged with all their native freshness and beauty of suggestion.

The substitution of words of Latin derivation for the short, hearty, monosyllabic Saxon was a serious injury to the vital force and strength of the language. To all except Latin scholars, — and in a great measure to them also, because of inattention to etymological study, — there was a loss of meaning in the words, a loss of the sensuous imagery and the many-sided suggestiveness peculiar to native words. Hence the loss of poetic power, and the necessity fully realized by our later poets of a recurrence to the fountain-head, to a greater use of Saxon terms, and the reviving of old words from earlier authors. The first rule for strength and energy of style, is that there

<sup>1</sup> Third Lecture, Second Series, p. 95.

should always be the greatest amount of thought for a given amount of sound. Hence the loss of power by the substitution of polysyllables for simple and monosyllabic words.

Anglo-Saxon grammar turned upon the use of inflections. Its syntax belongs to that of the inflected languages. Its grammar, therefore, so far as dependent on its system of inflections, passed away without sensible influence on modern English.

The pronunciation was never settled. Although a common language prevailed from the blending together of the different dialects, yet each word naturally retained its peculiar form of pronunciation. This is manifest from the great variety in orthography. Words were evidently spelled as pronounced, or as nearly so as different writers could agree in the absence of any accredited standard. Some words are found spelled in a dozen or more different ways, and differently in different ages. Writers often confounded letters, and used them indifferently for each other; transposed, substituted, or added vowels and consonants at their pleasure. In view of this fact, little can be hoped from attempts to fix our English pronunciation from the usage of our Saxon progenitors.<sup>1</sup>

In the inflection of its words, the Anglo-Saxon agrees in the main with other members of the Gothic family of languages. It stands about midway between the classic tongues and modern English. Grammarians are not agreed in their classification of the parts of speech and the forms of declension and conjugation. The definite article — used also for the demonstrative and relative pronoun as in the German language and the adjective are

<sup>1</sup> Klipstein, *A.-S. Grammar*, p. 35.

declined in three genders, and in both numbers. From the article are derived the English definite article and the demonstrative pronoun. The adjective is compared, much as in English, by adding *re* to form the comparative, and *est* or *ost* for the superlative. The personal pronouns *ic*, I; *þu*, thou; and *he*, *heo*, *hit*, he, she, it, are declined, and the first two in the dual number. *ic* makes *min* in the genitive; *þu*, *þin*; and *he* and *hit*, *his*. Our *their* appears in the genitive plural *hira*. *Him* is the dative in the masculine and feminine singular, and in the plural of all genders. The possessive pronouns are formed from the genitive, as in English.

In the conjugation of the verb, inflections are combined with auxiliary verbs. The present and the imperfect tenses are inflected; the other tenses are formed by auxiliaries, which undergo inflection, joined to the present infinitive or participle. The weak and strong inflections are found much as in English; the weak marked by change of ending, the strong by change of stem-vowel also. The present infinitive ends in *an*, which is preserved in early English as *en*; the imperfect is formed by adding *ode* (*ede*), *de*, or *te*, to the root, and the participle past by adding *od* (*ed*), *d* or *t*, in the weak conjugation. In the strong, the imperfect is monosyllabic, changes its vowel, and its past participle ends in *en*. Example of the first: *lufian*, to love; imperfect, *lufode*; participle *lufod*. Of the second: *bindan*, to bind; imperfect, *band*; participle, *bunden*. The present participle ends in *ende*, the gerund in *enne* or *anne*. The latter is always preceded by the preposition *to*, and is equivalent to the Latin supine and the future participle in *rus*. The prefix *ge* is found with all parts of the verb, but commonly with the parts expressing past time; — the early English



*y* as *yclept*. In the present indicative, the second person singular ends in *ast* or *st*, the third person in *að* (*ath*), or *ð* (*th*); the plural persons all in *að* (*ath*). The past tense has the endings *de*, *dest*, *de*, in the singular; the subjunctive *de* in all; while the plural persons of both modes end in *don*.

Many of the rules for the government of the different cases correspond very closely to Latin usage. Relative adjectives, denoting *want*, *knowledge*, *remembrance*, and the like, take a genitive after them. While those denoting *desire*, *disgust*, *pleasure*, *profit*, *injury*, and the like, take a dative.

So verbs of *bidding*, *forbidding*, *serving*, *following*, *obeying*, *consenting to*, take a dative; of *ruling* and *separation*, the ablative; of *needing*, *tempting*, *using*, *remembering*, *forgetting*, *ceasing*, &c., the genitive. The same resemblance is found also in the prepositions. These analogies doubtless refer to an early period in the history of language.

This brief notice will suffice to show that while the syntax of the language is quite unlike the English, following the analogy of inflected languages; some of the forms of the inflections, particularly in the pronouns, adjectives, and verbs, have been reduced and simplified, others wholly rejected.

It remains to speak of the words the English has received from the Anglo-Saxon. The first point to be noticed here is the remarkable economy of expression in words of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Very little observation will suffice to convince the most careless observer of the very great proportion of monosyllabic words in common use to express common things and common acts; as the names of the elements,

*fire, air, rain, dew, snow, &c.* ; of animals, *fox, bear, wolf, cat, dog, cow, horse, &c.* ; of the parts of the body, *hand, foot, head, eye, &c.* ; for the exercise of our faculties, *see, hear, think, run, leap, walk, hop, jump, &c.* ; *swim, float, dive, sink, &c.* "The fire is said to *burn, glow, parch, dry, scorch, blast, scathe*. Water is said to *flow, glide, run, roll, lash, dash, splash, gush, foam*. To mourn, *sigh, groan, weep, moan, laugh, smile, smirk*, express affections of the mind. In the sky we have *sun, moon, and stars*. The earth yields *grass, corn, hay, straw, wheat, rye, oats*. Our ordinary food is *bread, fowl, flesh, fish* ; our fuel, *coal, wood, peat, turf*. These, and such like words as these, form the staple of the English language, and more particularly of English poetry."<sup>1</sup>

This principle of economy as one peculiar to the English language, and inherited by the English from the Saxon, was early shown in the rejection of inflections, and the adoption of the most direct logical method of expression, allowing of no delay in the apprehension of the thought beyond that required for the utterance of successive words. This tendency was exhibited even earlier, in the later Saxon literature, as the translation of the Gospels, which exhibits much less of the peculiar syntax of the Saxon literature than is to be found in most Saxon works ; though this was due in part to the simplicity of the idiom required, and a close adherence to the form of the Latin, from which the translation was made. It is quite possible, or rather probable, if we were to judge from the analogy of other languages, that the spoken language was much simpler in this respect than the written, and that there were comparatively few inflections, and consequently little inversion. In later

<sup>1</sup> *Harrison on the English Language*, pp. 81, 82.

times this economy has been exhibited in dropping the sound of the final *e*, which was formerly pronounced, and in blending the final *ed*, of the past tense and the participle, with the preceding syllable, as *loved*; or in changing it with the letter *t*, as, *askt* for *asked*, according to the analogy of *slept*, *crept*.

The great poets, as Shakspeare, Milton, and later, Byron, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson, and others, have fully understood the power and poetic beauty of Saxon speech; while Moore has shown its rich musical flow when properly combined.

This principle of economy is still better seen in the formation of words with the least possible expense of sound. Take the syllable *at*, and prefix consonants, and then change the vowels, and a large number of words is the result.

Bat, bet, bit, bot, but; cat, cit, cot, cut; dit, dot; fat, fet, fit; gat, get, git, got, gut; hat, hit, hot; jet, jot, jut; ket, kit; let, lot; mat, met, mit, mot; net, nit, not; pat, pet, pit, pot, put; rat, ret (rite), rot, rut; sat, set, sit, sot, sut; tat, tit, tot, tut; vat, (vote); wet, wit, wot; (yate), yet, (yote). By adding the letter *e* to many of these, new words in use are formed. Other examples will readily suggest themselves.

In the examples above given, it is possible that examination into the cognate dialects would complete all the forms under each letter, thus completing the variations of sound and sense within the limits prescribed. It is but reasonable to suppose that the completeness existing is due to the mingling of many different dialects, each of which preserved a portion of the original inheritance.

*Words derived from the Anglo-Saxon.*

These may be considered with reference to their forms and their meaning.

It is evident that most monosyllables, and derivatives from them, are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The following terminations indicate the same source:—Of adjectives, *y, ish, some, ful, less*, as *windy, childish, handsome, thankful, homeless*. The last two are applied to roots from other sources than the Anglo-Saxon, while the former belong almost exclusively to words of native origin. Of nouns, the terminations *er*,—not to be mistaken for the Latin *or*,—*hood, dom, ness, ship*, as *writer, manhood, wisdom, greatness, hardship*. The last two are also applied to words of Latin origin. The adverbial termination *ly*, though strictly of Anglo-Saxon origin, is applied to roots from all sources. As there are no peculiar verbal endings, no classification can be made on this principle. It may, however, be observed that verbs which make a change in the vowel of the root in inflection, in other words, of the strong conjugation, are, as a general rule, of Anglo-Saxon origin. In short, what few inflections we have are from the same source, as, the ending of the possessive case and the plural of nouns, the cases of pronouns, the endings *er, est*, in the comparison of adjectives, and the inflection of the tenses, persons, and past participles of verbs. The following parts of speech,—interjections, articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, the numerals, *one, two, three, &c.*, up to a *million*; ordinals with the exception of *second*; adjectives and adverbs of irregular comparison,—are from the Anglo-Saxon. Hence the framework of sentences, the setting of thought, the words most frequently employed, and which are indis-

pensable to the use of language at all, are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The following are the principal Anglo-Saxon prefixes: *a, be, em, for, fore, mis, out, over, un, and under*; as *ahead, befriend, embody, forbid, forebode, misdeed, outdo, overact, unbend, unlike, undergo*.”<sup>1</sup>

As regards the meaning of words, it may be said first, that, as a general rule, all names of particular objects or parts of objects, all words to indicate the actions and sentiments of common life, the language of house and home, of the shop, of business generally, and such words as belong to the ordinary intercourse of men, are from the Anglo-Saxon. Our generic terms are from the Latin, as *objects, color, motion, passion, affection, animal, plant, &c.* But particular objects of sense or thought, as *sun, moon, hill, house, wood, stream, &c.*; particular colors, *blue, green, red, &c.*; particular motions, *run, leap, walk, fly, &c.*; particular passions, *love, hate, &c.*, are Anglo-Saxon. The language of classification, when first applied to Anglo-Saxon material, was applied by scholars, and had already become fixed in another tongue.

The number of words in English of Anglo-Saxon origin, has, until recently, been greatly over-estimated. A large number of writers have followed Warner's estimate, who made some three fifths to three fourths of all to be from the Anglo-Saxon. Recent more careful examination has quite reversed this, and shown that by far the larger proportion are from foreign sources. By counting every word in the dictionaries of Robertson and Webster, M. Thommerel has established the fact that of the sum total of 43,566 words, 29,853 came from classical, 13,230 from Teutonic, and the rest from miscellaneous sources.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Worcester's Dictionary, 4to, p. xlviii.

<sup>2</sup> See Max Müller's *Science of Language*, p. 84. Am. Ed.

According to its vocabulary, the English would be reckoned with the French and the Spanish, among the Romance languages. But judged by the words in actual use among different writers and speakers, or in common intercourse among men, the Saxon character of the language at once comes out in the strongest light. The vital, assimilating power of the language is essentially English, having a stronger affinity to the Gothic than the Romance side, yet, after all, neither Saxon nor Latin, but English.

Of the kinds of words in use by different authors, Marsh has given the most satisfactory illustration. It must suffice to note merely a few of the results of his thorough and extended examination. When he speaks of the vocabulary of an author, every part of speech is counted as a distinct word, but all the inflected forms of a given verb, or adjective, are treated as one word. Thus *safe*, *safely*, *save*, are counted as three words; but *save*, *saved*, and *saving*, as one. He finds that the vocabulary of "The Ormulum," written about 1225, contains ninety-seven per cent. of words from the Anglo-Saxon. The vocabulary of the English Bible has sixty per cent. native; of Shakspeare, about the same; while the stock of words employed by Milton has less than twenty-three per cent. of Anglo-Saxon. It needs to be remembered, however, that many of the words from foreign sources are used but very seldom, some only once or twice, while the native words are repeated, some of them, hundreds and thousands of times, — yet all count alike.

In the actual use of words, including of course all the repetitions, the proportion is in all cases largely in favor of the native element: —

Chaucer's Prologue to Canterbury Tales,	
420 verses, . . . . .	88 per cent.
Spenser's Faërie Queene, Book II., Canto VII.,	86 "
John's Gospel, Chap. I., IV., XVII., . . . . .	96 "
Shakspeare, Othello, Act v., . . . . .	89 "
Milton, Paradise Lost, Book VI., . . . . .	80 "
" L' Allegro, Book VI., . . . . .	90 "
Johnson, Preface to Dictionary, entire, . . . . .	72 "
Macaulay's Essay on Bacon, . . . . .	75 "
Bryant's Thanatopsis, . . . . .	84 "
Mrs. Browning's Cry of the Children, . . . . .	92 " <sup>1</sup>

It is worthy of note that the proportion varies in different authors according to the subject,—the light and humorous requiring more of the native language; the grave and serious, more from foreign sources. This difference depends of course on the power which the author possesses over his materials, and is one of the tests of a truly great writer. His command of language is no mean evidence of his range of thought.

The more careful study of old English of late years, on the part of our great poets especially, has led to the revival of many old Anglo-Saxon words, and to a greater use of this portion of our vocabulary. It is due, also, in part, to a more healthful sentiment in both literature and art, a greater regard for the true, the real, and therefore a care for the selection of those means the most adequate to its expression.

**REFERENCES.** *History.*—See Sharon Turner's Anglo-Saxons. Pauli's Life of Alfred. Thierry, Conquête de l'Angleterre.

*Literature.*—Turner's Anglo-Saxons, vol. iii. Conybeare's Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry. Longfellow's

<sup>1</sup> See much larger table,—Marsh, First Series, pp. 124 et seq.

Poets and Poetry of Europe. Marsh's Lectures, both series. Craik's History of the English Language and Literature. Spalding's English Literature.

*Language.* — Latham on the English Language. Preface to Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Preface to Worcester's Quarto Dictionary. Harrison on the English Language. Müller's Science of Language. And particularly Marsh's Lectures.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE DANISH ELEMENT. — THE NORMANS.

First Appearance of the Danes — Origin and Character — Hate of Christians — Extent of their Conquests — Recognized by William the Conqueror — Become civilized — Affect the Character of the Anglo-Saxons — Deepened the Love of Maritime Adventure — Nelson — Language, as affected by the Danes — Few Words introduced by them — The Normans in France — Early Culture — Two Dialects of the French — Arab Learning and Influence — The Norman Conquest — Radical Difference in Character between the Normans and the Saxons, as seen in later times — No attempt to extirpate the old Language — Results of the Conquest as summed up by Craik — Use of the Latin, Norman, and Saxon Languages — Earl of Arundel — Anglo-Norman — Earliest English — Extent of Norman Influence on the Language during the first two Centuries of Norman Rule.

*The Danish Element.*

It was about a century and a half after their adoption of Christianity and settled abodes, that the Saxons were startled by the piratical expeditions of the Norsemen. "It was in the year 787," observes Thierry,<sup>1</sup> "that some strangers came in three vessels, and landed at one of the seaports of the eastern coast. The Saxon magistrate went down to meet them, to learn whence they came and

<sup>1</sup> *Conquête de l'Angleterre*, vol. i. p. 106.

their wishes. The strangers quietly allow him to approach within their reach, then suddenly fall upon him and his retinue, plunder the neighboring houses, and sail away." Such was the first appearance in England of the pirates of the north, called Danes, or Normands (men of the north), according as they came from the Isles of the Baltic, or the mountainous coasts of Norway. They belonged to the Scandinavian branch of the Gothic family. They sprung, therefore, from the same primitive race as the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks. They spoke a language intelligible in the main to both; but this sign of ancient fraternity saved from their hostile incursions neither Saxon Britain nor Frankish Gaul, nor even the territory beyond the Rhine, still inhabited by men of the Teutonic race and language. The conversion of the Teutonic tribes of the south to the Christian faith had broken all ties between them and the Teutons of the north. The Northman of the eighth century still gloried in the title, "Son of Odin," and treated as bastards and renegades the German children of the Church. He made no distinction between them and the people they had conquered, and whose religion they had adopted. Anglo-Saxon, Frank, Gaul, or Latin, were all the same to him who had remained faithful to the ancient gods of Germany. Religious fanaticism and the honor of his Fatherland were allied in the soul of the Scandinavian to an impetuosity that knew no law, and a thirst for gain that was never sated. They shed the blood of priests without remorse, — liked nothing better than to pillage churches of the offerings of piety, and to stable their horses in the chapels of kings. On one occasion, after laying waste with fire and sword one of the Christian towns, "We have chanted mass," said

they, "with our lances; it began at early dawn and it has lasted all day." Such were the men who now prepared to find homes on English soil, and to add one more element to the already mixed blood of the English race. It must suffice to remark that almost on their first appearance they made complete conquest of the kingdom of Northumberland, or England north of the Humber, which they continued to hold under independent Danish kings till 953. In *Domesday Book*,<sup>1</sup> made under the direction of William the Conqueror, and giving a description of the lands of the kingdom allotted among his followers, the lands of Northumberland were not included as forming a part of his Saxon conquests. They were already in the hands of his kinsmen, who had taken possession of them at about the same time that his ancestors had established themselves in the north of France, and he acknowledged the relationship. The inhabitants of this northern portion of England sufficiently vindicated their Danish blood for centuries by their restless spirit, and the constant trouble they gave English sovereigns, till finally repressed by the stern discipline of the House of Tudor. The Danes also settled so largely along the eastern coast, from the Thames to the Humber, that the population of this section was for a long period under Danish rather than Saxon laws. In fact for more than two centuries prior to the Norman Conquest in 1066, the laws of the Northmen prevailed over full one half of England, and from 1003 to 1041, for four successive reigns, the whole of England was under Danish kings.

After gaining a lodgment in the Island, the Danes were never expelled. Their temporary reverses re-

<sup>1</sup> See *Harrison*, p. 30.

sulted only in the withdrawal for a time of their leading men. At first, like the Saxons before them, and as is the custom of barbarous tribes, they exiled or exterminated the native inhabitants in the districts they overrun; but soon attracted by the civilization they witnessed, they were content to subdue, soon learned the religious faith and manners of the conquered, and ere long became blended with them as one people.

The influence of the Danes was rather upon the character than upon the language of the Anglo-Saxons. Partly as the result of their improved social condition, and more from the influence of the religious system they embraced, the latter had lost much of their pristine enterprise and vigor as a race. The absolute submission to spiritual authority, that suppressed all inquiry and independence, the ignorance and superstition, the loose morality, the customs and usages, half heathen, half Christian, that prevailed in the Church, all acted as a depressing force upon the native energies of the Saxon mind. The Danes infused new and fresh life into the decaying system, and enabled it to withstand the rude shocks soon to follow, and to retain a life and potential ability that the revival of a purer faith at a later day was to quicken into a more glorious civilization and culture.

One marked feature of the Norse character was never to die out or be stifled, — the love of maritime adventure. For centuries this had been developed by the boldest excursions and ventures into every sea, and though for a time checked by the same untoward influences that had checked the progress of the Saxons of Britain, it was never suppressed. It is more than

the position of Britain, it is the native character of the race, their inheritance from their Saxon and Danish ancestry, that has made it the ruler of the seas. The last most thorough illustration of the old sea-king, the scourge of the ocean, was exhibited in Lord Nelson, who, by his indefatigable pursuit of the French fleet from ocean to ocean, and sea to sea, till it went down before his terrible broadsides at Aboukir and Trafalgar, vindicated his Danish name and Saxon blood.

The language of England was little affected by the Danes. Differing but little in dialect at the start, they soon adopted the language of the country. Scholars skilled in the niceties of dialectic peculiarities profess to find many traces of their dialect in the early literature, and in some districts of England originally occupied by them, especially the northern counties of England. There are a few names of persons and of places usually regarded as of Danish origin; of persons, those ending in *son*, as *Johnson*, *Nelson*; of places, those ending in *by* and *wich*, as *Derby*, *Norwich*. The ending *by* denoted a town or village, and *wich* a station. Hence *Norwich*, — north station, &c. The word *by* still exists in our *by-laws*, properly the laws of a town, as distinguished from the laws of the state. But the extent of Danish influence on the language is by no means determined among scholars, and it is probable that the exact line between the original Scandinavian elements that were united in its first occupation by the different German tribes, and those introduced later by the Danes can never be accurately distinguished.

Latham<sup>1</sup> gives the following specimens of Norse words in the northern provincial dialects : —

<sup>1</sup> *Hand-book of the English Language*, p. 48.

Provincial.	Common Dialect.	Norse.
Braid	Resemble	Braas, <i>Swed.</i>
Eldin	Firing	Eld, <i>Dan.</i>
Force	Waterfall	Fors, <i>D. Swed.</i>
Gar	Make	Göra, <i>Swed.</i>
Gill	Ravine	Gil, <i>Iceland.</i>
Greet	Weep	Grata, <i>Iceland.</i>
Ket	Carrion	Kiöd, <i>Dan.</i>
Lint	Seek	Lede, <i>Dan.</i>
Lathe	Barn	Lade, <i>Dan.</i>
Lill	Little	Lille, <i>Dan.</i>

*The Norman Element.* — 1066–1350.

In the early part of the tenth century, a body of Danes or Northmen, after an unsuccessful attempt to make a lodgment in England, made a descent upon the north of France. They were led by Rollo, surnamed the Ganger, and in the year 912 obtained from Charles III. of France the cession of a province, that was called after them by the name of Normandy. It extended from the Loire to Flanders. The original inhabitants, a mixture of Celts, Romans, and Franks, who spoke a corrupt form of Latin, or the Romance dialect as it is called, were not exterminated, but, united with the conquerors, gave them their religion and their language. From this fact it is evident that the original inhabitants continued to constitute the larger part of the population, but submitted to the more warlike and hardy men of the north. The Normans maintained a distinct nationality under the descendants of Rollo, who continued to rule over the territory their fathers had acquired, rendering but a nominal allegiance to the crown of France, under the title of Dukes of Normandy.

The Normans soon became distinguished as one of the foremost nations in Europe for their culture and civilization. Their fresh blood from the north had brought with it new enterprise, which showed itself first in the greater interest in such learning as was then to be had, and then in a spirit of conquest, soon to be spent in vain efforts to rescue the Holy Land from the infidels. Their language, by the infusion of the Scandinavian element, differed a little from that in the south of France. The Norman bore the name of *Lingue d'oïl*, the other *Lingue d'oc*, — the latter part of the name representing the forms to express the affirmative *yes*. Both dialects were developed at an early day by poets, in songs and tales of love and chivalry.

In France the learning which had been fostered by Charlemagne had never fallen into decline as in England. The schools established by Alcuin had been kept up with some degree of success, though greatly restricted in their influence by the disorders of the times. In the tenth century, learning had received a new impulse from contact with Arabic scholars in Spain. New interest was awakened in the classics, and attention was for the first time turned to what may be named scientific studies. The Arabs had first become acquainted with Greek literature in the eighth century. The works they studied most were those relating to metaphysics and mathematics, or to the various branches of natural science, as botany, medicine, and chemistry. For five centuries they cultivated these studies with a diligence and success that made the south of Spain the garden of the world, crowded libraries with commentaries on the ancient authors and with original investigations, and made Arabic Spain the fountain of learning for Western Europe. "Thither students

were accustomed to repair from every country to study in the Arabic schools ; and many of the teachers in the chief towns of France and Italy had finished their education in these seminaries, and were now diffusing among their countrymen the new knowledge which they had thence acquired. The writings of several of the Greek authors, also, and especially those of Aristotle, had been made generally known to scholars by Latin versions of them from the Arabic.”<sup>1</sup> Arabic learning was one of the first and most important agencies in the revival of letters in modern times. Its influence had scarcely been felt in England before the Conquest, save upon the few scholars who visited the schools of Normandy, and especially the University of Paris, during the preceding fifty years.

In consequence of Danish settlements and Danish rule, England was already half Normanized, so to speak, before William the Conqueror set foot upon English soil. He had only to complete what his kinsmen had begun and been steadily carrying forward for near three centuries. But besides a further admixture of northern blood, he brought a higher intellectual culture, and introduced scholars and such measure of learning as had been attained in the schools of Normandy. The Saxon portion of the population of England made but a comparatively feeble resistance ; a large portion of the people were evidently indifferent if not favorable to his pretensions, which, on political grounds alone, were, to say the least, as good as those of Harold who opposed him, besides bearing the sanction of the church.

As an important element in the future history of the language and literature, we should not fail to notice the radical difference in character between the Norman por-

<sup>1</sup> Craik, vol. i. p. 50.



tion of the English and the old inhabitants, Anglo-Saxon or Dano-Saxon as they might be. This difference is due in part to the mixed blood of the Normans, and the peculiar development effected in their character from the civilization to which they had been exposed on French soil, but more to the social position they held as the master-race in England for three centuries before there was any proper fusion with the original inhabitants. They became at once and continued to be the patrician class. A patrician spirit was thoroughly developed in them and became settled as a part of their character, and to this day has remained an important element in English life and as affecting the course of English history. The Norman is represented in the English nobility, in the House of Lords, in the royal family, in the whole spirit and policy of the British government. He is represented in the love of rank, in the respect for blood, in all the social relations of Englishmen. The Norman is the aristocrat, insisting on his rights and privileges, and the opponent of all reforms in church or state, and the bitter enemy of popular ideas and popular institutions the world over. His character needs to be understood as one of the prime factors in English history. The other is the Saxon, for centuries kept down, subject to all the oppressions of a haughty race, his language despised and neglected, till at length, making himself necessary to the furtherance of his master's ends, he came to demand some share of civil rights, and steadily step by step to assume his true place, — represented to-day by the English Commons, by the English people, — for a time gaining the ascendancy in the management of public affairs in the days of the Commonwealth, but on the whole satisfied with a steady progress in civil rights, and civil freedom. Strictly con-

servative, like his progenitors before the Conquest, loving his home and the comforts of social life, devoted to popular liberty, but content with its enjoyment within strictly constitutional limits, — asking for freedom rather than license, — the Saxon is still radically distinct from the Norman, though both are now working together in the development of English ideas and English civilization, and the spread of the English language over the earth.

It is true that the ranks of the English nobility, or the patrician class, have been largely recruited from the Saxon portion of the population, as the reward of distinguished merit in arms or statesmanship, but the recruits soon become imbued with the same spirit of class, which has become hereditary and controlling. On the other hand, and as in some degree antagonistic to this patrician love and respect for rank, has been developed the respect for wealth. This is the badge of Saxon worth, and enters largely into the social relations of English life. These two traits of English character may be traced back in no small degree to the influence of the Conquest, and have had an important bearing upon the history, character, and literature of England.

There seems to be no good reason for believing that William ever seriously undertook to extirpate the English language, and to substitute the French in its place. On the other hand it is recorded that at first he undertook to learn it, so as to understand appeals made to him, till his other engagements interfered.

The consequences of this revolution are briefly summed up by Craik,<sup>1</sup> as follows: —

“1. A French-speaking royal family was placed upon the throne, surrounded of course by a French-speaking

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the History of the English Language*, p. 46.

court. Even when the line of the Conqueror died out, it was succeeded by another, that of the Plantagenets of Anjou, which was also French. It is known, in fact, that French continued to be the language in common use with every English king from the Conqueror down to Richard II., inclusive, or till the end of the fourteenth century; it is not known that, with the exception, perhaps, of Richard II., any of them ever did or could speak English, (the native dialect.)

“2. A very great number of Normans, all speaking French, were brought over and settled in the kingdom. There were the military forces by which the Conquest was achieved and maintained, both those in command and the private soldiers. There was a vast body of churchmen spread over the land, and occupying eventually every ecclesiastical office in it, from the primacy down to that of the humblest parish or chapel-priests, besides half filling, probably, all the monastic establishments. There were all the officers of state and inferior civil functionaries, down to nearly the lowest grade. Finally, there were, with few exceptions, all the land-holders, great and small, throughout the kingdom. The members of all these classes and their families must have been at first entirely ignorant of English, and they and their descendants would naturally continue for a longer or shorter time to use only the language of their ancestors.

“3. French soon came to be exclusively the language of oral pleadings, at least in all the superior courts. It could not well be otherwise, while the judges in these courts were all Normans. Neither laws nor deeds, however, were ever drawn up in French till more than a century and a half after the conquest; all the new laws that were promulgated were in Latin till after the accession of

Edward I. (in 1272), when they began to be sometimes in Latin, sometimes in French. Even the judgments or decisions of the courts, in which the pleadings were in French, were not always enrolled in that language, but often in Latin. And the charters granted by the Norman kings were frequently in English down to the accession of Henry II. (in 1154), when Latin was substituted, which had been the language uniformly employed for the same purpose down to the time of Alfred the Great." (Abridged.)

The results were, that Latin continued to be the language of learned works, and Norman French became the language of popular and fashionable literature, to the entire exclusion, for a time, of the Saxon dialect. The French language must have been learned and understood by many of the native population. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, there was no English taught in the schools, but children first learned French, and through this the Latin. This practice was introduced at the Conquest, and was kept up till past the middle of the fourteenth century. The teachers were mainly foreigners and churchmen, and commonly unacquainted with English. The native dialect was banished to the rural districts, and was recognized only as the language of the peasantry and the lower classes generally. But the necessary intercourse between the conquerors and the conquered soon developed a common medium of discourse, a sort of Anglo-Norman jargon at first, as we may well believe. The spoken French was, as it still is to a great degree, an uninflected language, and with a comparatively simple order of words in its syntax. The Saxon now fully settled, could easily part with its peculiarities, when the only purpose of its use was the utter-

ance of thought, without care for niceties of speech or grammatical rules. The nobles on their estates soon, to a great degree secluded, from the inconvenience of travelling and intercourse with others, would necessarily learn the language of their peasantry, and ere long we find some of the nobility knowing no other language. Of this we have an instance in the case of the Earl of Arundel and other noblemen, on an embassy to the Pope in 1164, who, after his colleague, the bishop, had spoken in Latin, stood up and spoke in English, — beginning his speech with the words: "We, who are illiterate laymen, do not understand one word of what the bishops have said to your holiness."<sup>1</sup> This English must have been much after the character of the later portion of the old Saxon Chronicle closed in 1154, or perhaps, more probably, of the Anglo-Norman jargon, traces of which, as a separate dialect, continued for a long period. It is obvious, however, from the earliest specimens of English so-called, that by far the larger proportion of words was Saxon. The subjects on which it was employed were Saxon, the Norman ideas to be introduced were few, and left but little trace on the dialect employed. By the dropping of its inflections, the Saxon would naturally fall into the present order in the collocation of its words. But the marked difference in spirit between the two classes, and the bitter enmity long cherished in the heart of the Saxon towards the invader, were sufficient to keep alive the old language, in its verbal forms, if not in the original idiom and syntax. But few words of Norman or Latin origin found their way into the language during the first two centuries of Norman rule, — very few, considering the general prevalence of French and Latin in all

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Craik, i. p. 52.

the higher circles, and in all the public relations of society. These few were almost without exception such as applied to objects of traffic between the two classes, eventually resulting in synonymes or nicer discriminations in the later speech; or such terms as were connected with the feudal system, relating to war and chivalry, law terms, and some few from the service of the church. The words properly of Latin origin will be noticed under their appropriate head. Of the first class are the Norman words *beef, veal, pork*, for the Saxon *ox, calf, hog*, and used for the respective animals when killed for food. Of the second class, are *duke, baron, count, villain, service, chivalry, esquire, challenge, domain, &c.* A curious instance of the partial adoption of a word in a new sense, is offered in the use of the words *grand* and *great*, as *grand-parent*, but *great uncle*. The first relation was provided for by a word of Norman origin, the second at that time had less prominence, and came to fuller recognition when the time for adopting Norman words had gone by.

## CHAPTER V.

## NORMAN ELEMENT CONTINUED. — EARLY ENGLISH.

Gradual disuse of Norman French in England — Statutes in English — Final disuse — Duration of Norman Influence as a Distinct Element — Rise of a genuine English Spirit and Character — Gradual Rise of English Speech — Layamon — "The Ormulum" — Marsh's Opinion — Vocabulary — First Step towards a Union of the Races in the time of John — Condition in the Thirteenth Century — Bishop of Lincoln — Alehouse Rhymes — An Intermediate Idiom in the large Towns — A Saxon Middle-Class — Dramatic Exhibitions — Minstrels — Coleridge's Glossarial Index — Changes in the Old Language, internal; Causes — English instead of Norman for Historical Themes in the Fourteenth Century — Scarcity of good French — Resort to Native Authors — Their Character — Merry Tales — No uniformity in the New Language — Plastic Condition — Value of the services of Langlande and Chaucer — Chaucer's Vocabulary, according to Marsh — Wycliffe and his School — Beginning of Modern English.

NORMAN French, as a language in popular use, fell into discredit in consequence of the Anti-French feeling engendered by the wars with France in the fourteenth century. The intercourse, which had been so extensive up to this time, in great measure ceased. The sons of the nobility no longer visited France for their education. French was soon discontinued in the schools at home, probably about the year 1350. This was due, in the first instance, to the patriotic efforts of a grammar-school master, John Cornwall by name, and his pupil Richard

Pencriche. As early as 1362 it was ordered in Parliament that all trials should thereafter be conducted in English, on the ground that the French tongue was becoming much unknown in the realm, and because of the manifest propriety that the parties in suit should understand what was said for or against them by the advocates. This law evidences a new spirit in Parliament: it was not Norman, but English, in its tone, and marks the opening of a new era in English history. Yet this statute was in French, as all the statutes were for a century longer, — the form continuing after a radical change of spirit had been effected. The first in English was in the first year of Henry VII. (1485). It was not till four years after that English came into exclusive use. In the House of Lords, French was used to a still later date, as was to have been expected from its Norman blood. Some of the parliamentary forms are still in that language. Reports of law cases continued to be drawn up in French till the middle of the seventeenth century; nor did the use of the language for legal purposes cease till some time after the beginning of the eighteenth.<sup>1</sup>

But the Norman element as such, as a distinct and foreign element, unnaturalized on English soil, was limited to about three centuries. At the expiration of this period, it coalesced with the Saxon in the formation of English, — English character, English speech, English nationality. Whatever did not unite in this organic union may be regarded as French, — the same in kind and character as the later French, — a properly foreign element; as much so as the Italian or Spanish. Hitherto the two elements, Saxon and Norman, had each preserved to a remarkable degree their distinctive pecu-

<sup>1</sup> See Craik, *Outlines*, pp. 81, 82.



liarities in both language and character. For the first century they seem to have existed in mutual repulsion, in the second in a state of indifference, and in the third to have been gradually attracted toward each other, the Saxon gaining the respect of the Norman by his substantial worth, and growing wealth and power, at the same time dropping the peculiarities of his national idiom; and the Norman becoming more and more isolated from his kinsmen across the channel, and realizing the value of a hearty union, or at least of friendly relations with the members of his own household. Up to the time of fusion, which may be stated in general terms at the year 1350, but a very small interchange of words had taken place between the dialects; but the Saxon now had the advantage, because of the national antipathy against the French, and the casting off of its local peculiarities, so to speak, for a more universal idiom, so that it could readily adopt and assimilate such words from the French as were necessary to complete its vocabulary. The result was a radically new language, — new in grammar, and new to a great extent in its vocabulary, if the vocabulary be regarded as a whole. The words in use were of simpler orthography in many cases; some in each dialect had been dropped, and a new vocabulary constructed, or rather had been allowed to grow up out of the remainder. In the work of Layamon, written, it is supposed, about 1185, the decay of the old Saxon forms is manifest; the grammar is evidently breaking up, though more than half of the forms are of the Saxon prior to the conquest. But the words in use are, almost without exception, Saxon. In the *Ormulum*, written about a half-century later, it is said that there is hardly a trace of the old Saxon grammar; but it is not English altogether, or rather it is

English in the rough, crude, unsettled. The requirements of verse, however, prevent us from knowing how the author would have written, had he attempted prose. His peculiar method of spelling, the practice of doubling the consonants at the close of short syllables, to which he adheres with far greater uniformity than any other of the early writers, are proof of the state of flux in which the language was at the time. His words, too, are almost exclusively Saxon. Marsh regards it as "uncorrupted by any considerable mixture of foreign ingredients; for we discover no traces of the Norman element in the vocabulary, and but few in the syntax of this remarkable work."<sup>1</sup> And he adds in a note, "The vocabulary of the *Ormulum* consists of about twenty-three hundred words, exclusive of proper names and inflected forms. Among these I am unable to find a single word of Norman French origin, and scarcely ten which were taken directly from the Latin. The whole number of words of foreign etymology previously introduced into the Anglo-Saxon, which occur in the *Ormulum*, does not exceed sixty, though there is some uncertainty as to the origin of several words common to the Latin and Gothic languages in the earliest stage in which these latter are known to us."

The first step towards a union of the two races, and consequently of the languages, or, more strictly, in the development of a new language, was occasioned by the tyranny of King John, and the popular hatred of his foreign favorites. This hatred was felt alike by Norman and Saxon, and the Saxon's long-suppressed dislike of the foreigner found expression in a common alliance against the new-comers. *Magna Charta* was the re-

<sup>1</sup> First Series, p. 110.

sult, — the foundation of English civil liberty, the first recognition of popular rights. Though the share of civil rights and privileges which the Saxons obtained was but trifling, it was of immense importance in its future bearings. This common political interest at once had an effect towards assimilating a common language.

During the whole of the thirteenth century a marked distinction was still observed between the Normans and the men of Saxon origin. By taking an active part in all the civil feuds of the time, the Saxons were steadily forcing themselves into notice, and to a share of civil rights. Yet as late as 1280, notwithstanding the rise and prevalence of old English in certain circles, the Norman Bishop of Lincoln reckons in England but two languages: the Latin for the men of letters, and the French for the unlettered class. For the latter he wrote in French some religious treatises, making no account of the English tongue or of those who used it. The poets of the time, even those of English birth, composed their verses in French when they sought honor or profit. It was only village or ale-house rhymers that composed in English, or in a mixture of English and French, which served as a medium of intercourse between the upper and lower classes. This intermediate idiom was at first found in cities, where the population was more mixed and more on a footing of equality, through social position gained by success in trade, or in the mechanical arts. Then it gradually took the place of the degenerate Saxon, which, no longer spoken save by the lowest and poorest, was as much below the new idiom as this was below the language of the court, and of all who made pretension to taste and refinement. The Saxons

of the larger towns, which enjoyed certain municipal rights and privileges, by their attention to trade and commerce were acquiring wealth, and, to some extent, assuming the manners of the aristocracy by birth. They formed a Saxon middle class, ere long to be represented in Parliament. Thus the relative position of the two races was gradually changing, and with this change corresponded the relation of their respective languages. The political songs of the time, though for the most part written in Latin or French, are occasionally found in old English, and the relative proportion varying with the rise of the Saxons in power and influence, by the middle of the next century the larger part appear to have been composed in English. The dramatic exhibitions common on festival days in all the large towns for the amusement of the populace fostered the native dialect; and the native minstrels and story-tellers, long banished to the homes of the peasantry, began to find welcome in better circles, preparatory to superseding the French altogether in the course of the next century.

Still down to the close of the thirteenth century the language of the Saxon portion of the population remained in great measure pure. Of the eight thousand words given in Coleridge's "Glossarial Index," only some twelve to fifteen per cent., according to Marsh, are of Latin or Norman origin. Many of these were taken directly from Latin ecclesiastical works, though conformed to the method of Norman derivation. Many of these again were but little used. Indeed we are told that not more than four or five per cent. of the words of any author of this century were of foreign origin. The loss of inflections was made up by the greater use of auxiliary verbs and particles. The syntax of the Ormulum, which

is the best developed of any work of this period, differs but little from modern English.

The old vocabulary, the substance of the language, was not changed. Only the grammatical form had been broken up, decomposed, and changed from the synthetic form of the old Saxon to the analytic of modern English. There was thus a genuine English language, as opposed both to the old Saxon and to the Norman, — sufficiently developed and settled to be able to receive and incorporate the immense additions soon to be made from the Norman, and, at a later day, from every language with which it came in contact. This change from the old Saxon was begun by the Danish conquest and consummated by the Norman. It was so far a change in the language itself, not the result of fusion with any other, or as the result of the incorporation of forms or words from any other. This was the old English.

The change in this, effected by the introduction of French words, was made by those whose language was originally French, and by those who gladly copied from the French upon the fusion of the two races, Saxon and Norman, during the fourteenth century.

After the close of the thirteenth century most of those, whether in town or cloister, who had taste or talent for literature, undertook to treat in English those historical or imaginative themes that had previously been restricted to the Norman tongue. A great number of attempts of this sort appeared one after another in the first half of the fourteenth century. A part of the poets of this period, those especially who sought the favor of the higher classes, made French verses; others, content with the approbation of the middle classes, labored for them in the native dialect; others, uniting both languages in the

same kind of verse, changed them in alternate couplets, and sometimes with every other verse.<sup>1</sup> By degrees the scarcity of good French books composed in England became such that the higher classes were obliged to obtain from France the romances or narratives in verse with which to amuse themselves during their long evenings, and the ballads for festive occasions. The war and the rivalry of Edward's time inspired a mutual aversion between the nobility of the two nations, diminished the attraction of literature imported from France, and compelled those delicate in matters of national honor to be content with home productions. Those who lived in London and frequented the court still found something to satisfy their taste for the poesy and language of their ancestors; but the nobles and gentry who lived retired in their castles, or where a large number of persons speaking French could not easily be assembled, were obliged, for want of something to amuse them, to resort to authors in the native dialect.

These authors were distinguished from those who wrote for the court and nobility, by their esteem for peasants, laborers, and mechanics, in a word for their popular democratic spirit. Writers in French commonly treated these classes with contempt,—gave them no place in their narratives, where everything was of persons of the higher class,—noble barons and noble ladies. The English subjects of the “Merry Tales,” were the adventures of men of humble life, as those of “Peter the Ploughboy,” and such stories as are found in Chaucer. There was one great hindrance in the way of the progress of English. It had no uniformity in different sections, hardly even in adjoining towns and neighboring cities. It was at first a

<sup>1</sup> See *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*.

jumble of Norman and Saxon idioms and words. Each individual, according to his fancy or the degree of knowledge he had of the two languages, borrowed phrases and joined them together, with such pronunciation as he could master. In general each sought to put into his conversation all the French he could retain, in order to imitate the great, and to pass himself off for a distinguished personage. This mania, which had come to prevail even among the peasants, rendered it difficult to write English in a way to be generally understood. In spite of the merit of his poems, Chaucer seems to have feared that the diversity of idiom would prevent their being enjoyed out of London; and he prays God to grant his book the privilege of being understood by all who should wish to read it. There was thus a time early in the fourteenth century when the Saxon element came near losing its ascendancy, and but for the timely rise of a genuine national sentiment, and of writers to embody it in works that should command general regard, and be enabled thereby to harmonize the discordant elements, the English might have become essentially a Romance language. It is important to understand the peculiarly plastic, though chaotic condition of English speech at this juncture, in order to understand aright the rise and development of our modern English, and the real service rendered to letters by Chaucer and his compeers. The language was in a state of mixture, mechanical mixture,—not yet in chemical, or more strictly organic, union. The materials were present, but the principle of life was wanting. The way was fully prepared for the presence of a higher organic power that should come forth from a truly national spirit, capable of subjecting to itself all mere local and accidental peculiarities of character and speech,

and this was found in the age of Edward III. Ineffectual attempts, worthy of all honor, there had been, as the efforts of Layamon and Orm; and though it is of course impossible to fix any precise date to a change so important, and that must have required time to be fully established, yet, it may be safe to say that this change was effected about the middle of the fourteenth century; and that the Saxon speech furnished the framework of the new language, its grammatical forms, so far as it had any, its principles of derivation and composition, its formative principle in short, while from the Norman came a large part of its vocabulary. The early writers, like Langlande and Chaucer, had the command of both vocabularies, and chose the fittest words for their thoughts.

As both languages were familiar to most of their readers, the occurrence of Norman words offered no objection to the general currency of their works, and they in their turn helped to determine general usage, and to secure the adoption of such words in the new language. Fortunately these writers, Langlande, Wycliffe, Chaucer, and to some extent Gower also, were thoroughly English at heart, imbued with the national sentiment, and therefore little disposed to use words of French extraction, where others would answer their purpose.

From the confusion of speech, incident to the blending together of the two languages, in the early part of the fourteenth century, the example of Chaucer, observes Marsh, "did more to rescue his native tongue than any other single cause; and if we compare his dialect with that of any writer of an earlier date, we shall find that in compass, flexibility, expressiveness, grace, and all the higher qualities of poetical diction, he



gave it at once the utmost perfection which the materials at his hand would admit of."

"Chaucer did not introduce into the English language words which it had rejected as aliens before, but out of those which had been already received, he invested the better portion with the rights of citizenship, and stamped them with the mint-mark of English coinage. In this way he formed a vocabulary which, with few exceptions, the taste and opinion of succeeding generations has approved; and a literary diction was thus established, which in all the qualities required for the poetic art had at that time no superior in the languages of modern Europe."<sup>1</sup>

The same author has affirmed that not more than one hundred of the Romance words found in the writings of Chaucer have become obsolete, by no means as many as of the Anglo-Saxon he employed, though many from both sources are now so changed in form and orthography as hardly to be identified with their originals.

What Chaucer and other poets accomplished for a poetic diction, and indirectly too for prose, was earnestly carried forward in another direction for prose by Wycliffe, and his coadjutors, through the discussion of religious and political topics, and especially by the translation of the Scriptures into the language of the common people. Never in English history had there been a time so favorable for the development of a hearty, vigorous speech. The national spirit was in all the buoyancy and elasticity of youth, raised to the highest enthusiasm by brilliant successes in arms, and stirred to its depths by discussions on the profoundest topics which can move the human mind. And there were fit men, men of largest intellectual capa-

<sup>1</sup> Second Series, pp. 381, 382.

cities, developed by the best culture the schools afforded, and a large observation, to shape the language from the mass of plastic but chaotic material into living forms of beauty and power. Such was the birth of the English character, language, and literature. New elements came in to modify, to change it somewhat, in after times ; it has adapted itself to the advance in knowledge and civilization ; it has developed new powers under the hands of great masters ; declined and risen again according to the intellectual and moral life of the people that have used it, yet its inward essential character and spirit date back to the age of Edward III., and the middle of the fourteenth century.

## CHAPTER VI.

## NORMAN ELEMENT CONTINUED. — LEARNING. — LITERATURE.

William the Conqueror a Patron of Letters — Use of Latin in the Schools — Large Attendance at the Universities during the Thirteenth Century — Latin Chronicles — William of Malmesbury — Geoffrey of Monmouth — Latin Poetry — Miscellaneous Latin Literature — Richard de Bury — Roger Bacon — The Scholastic Philosophy — Influence on later English Writers — Theological Literature — Native Literature of the Normans — At the English Court — The Language of Provence — Character of the Native Literature as indebted to the Scandinavians and the Celts — Henry I. — Master Wace — The Arthurian Romance — Character of the Writers — The *San Greal* — Walter Mapes — Wright's Opinion — Place and Time of the Composition of Romance — Value — Transition from Verse to Prose — Chronicles of Froissart — Lord Berners' Translation — Separation of the English from the French — The Physical Elements of the National Character and Language Complete.

**WILLIAM** the Conqueror was a patron of letters. He filled the bishoprics and abbacies of England with the most learned men of his country. Lanfranc and Anselm, both famous scholars and theologians, successively occupied the see of Canterbury. The nobles coöperated with the king in the endowment of monasteries and abbeys, for the promotion of learning. William and most of his successors were trained up in the best learn-

ing of their times. Still what learning existed was in the Latin language, and was mainly confined to the clergy.

It was in Latin, says Craik, "that the teachers at the universities delivered their prelections in all the sciences, and that all the disputations and other exercises among the students were carried on. It was the same at all the monastic schools and other seminaries of learning." At a later period French found its way into the more public schools.

Few of the nobility, though patrons of learning for the sake of the Church, were initiated into the scholarship of the times. It was a wide-spread belief that learning belonged to the clergy, and they were not careful to correct the popular judgment. Some of the more liberal minded ecclesiastics, however, established schools in connection with cathedrals and monasteries, that were open to the community at large. Some of these in time became celebrated. The way was thus prepared for the founding and patronage of universities in the next century. The number of persons by whom these institutions were attended in the latter part of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth, is wellnigh incredible. They were reckoned by thousands, — thirty thousand at Oxford at one time, — of all ages from boyhood to advanced manhood, and poor scholars were to be found in every village mingling with all classes of people. Meagre as was the education received, it could not fail in this manner to contribute largely to awaken the popular mind, and to diffuse some degree of culture among the people. It led the way, doubtless, to the general movement and struggle of the lower classes in the next century for some share of civil rights, at least for a release from serfdom,

to which belongs the famous rising headed by Wat Tyler, in 1381, the last distinctively Saxon movement in England. It found expression still earlier in literature, and in efforts to secure ecclesiastical reforms by such men as Wycliffe and others.

As was to be expected, the language of literature for the educated classes was the Latin. In this tongue were composed not only the theological and moral treatises, but the philosophical and scientific works of the time, and a large number of historical works, — perhaps the most valuable portion of the Latin literature of the period under review. Craik has cited no less than fourteen different collections made in modern times, of these old Latin historians and chroniclers, one of them extending to twenty-nine volumes. Many of these begin with the creation of the world, and bring down their narratives to their own times; others begin with the Norman Conquest.<sup>1</sup> The first, in point of merit, is that of William of Malmesbury, in two parts; the “*Gesta Regum Anglorum*,” from the arrival of the Angles and Saxons, to the year 1120; the second, “*Historia Novella*,” which brings the narrative down to 1142. This author ranks next to Bede as an original pains-taking writer, — a man who had a love for truth, and some critical skill in arriving at it in the mass of materials at his command.

Referring the reader to Craik’s larger work, it must suffice to mention one more, Geoffrey of Monmouth, because of his importance in the history of Romance literature. His work is professedly a British history, translated in the main from a Welsh chronicle given to Geoffrey by his friend Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. It consists of nine books, giving the history of the

<sup>1</sup> Craik, *History*, vol. i.

Britons, from the time of Brutus, their supposed leader, the great-grandson of the Trojan Æneas, to the death of their king Cadwallader in 689. This work has preserved in the best form the traditions of the race who were driven out by the Angles and Saxons from their former homes. The outline of the story was given by one Nennius, who lived three centuries earlier, but additions were made by Geoffrey. His book was published in 1128, and at once obtained a very wide circulation, and became the corner-stone of the romantic fictions that centred in the person of Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. Most of the later chroniclers follow Geoffrey with little variation, none, however, improving upon his narrative sufficiently to supersede him.<sup>1</sup>

Latin poetry was not neglected. More than a score of names are cited, who obtained credit in their time for this class of composition. Of these the most remarkable was Walter Mapes, or Map, an Archdeacon of Oxford, celebrated in the latter part of the twelfth century, who came to be designated as the Anacreon of his day.

Under the head of miscellaneous Latin literature ought to be mentioned the "Philobiblon" of Richard de Bury. As the name implies, it is a treatise on books, by a genuine lover of good literature. The author was evidently a learned man, familiar with a wide range of classical learning; and he is perhaps the best illustration that has come down to us from that period of the influence of classical studies in developing the mind, and of the culture that was possible in the Middle Ages. His work, long neglected, though once very popular, has recently been reprinted in this country.

Another curious work of this period, called "Gesta

<sup>1</sup> See Analysis of Geoffrey's work in Ellis's *English Romances*.

Romanorum," is an evidence of the methods resorted to by the clergy to convey moral instruction to the people. It is a collection of short stories, in some part of classical origin, with a moral lesson appended, not always as forcible as well intended. Some of these tales have been presented in better forms by some later writers of merit.

The name of Roger Bacon, best known by his work called "Magnum Opus," who flourished in the thirteenth century, is justly held in honor for his attainments in mathematical and physical science. His writings still preserved "show that the range of his investigations included theology, grammar, the ancient languages, geometry, astronomy, chronology, geography, music, optics, mechanics, chemistry, and most of the other branches of experimental philosophy. In all these sciences he had mastered whatever was then known; and his knowledge, though necessarily mixed with much error, extended in various directions considerably farther than, but for the evidence of his writings, we should have been warranted in believing that scientific researches could have been carried in that age."<sup>1</sup> Yet, he was a marked exception to his age. The mass of inquirers were devoted rather to discussions in metaphysics and logic, under the influence of the prevailing scholastic philosophy.

This philosophy dates from the appearance at Paris of Peter Lombard's Four Books of Sentences, about the middle of the twelfth century. Some authors ascribe its origin to Anselm of Canterbury of a little earlier date. Certain it is that many of the most celebrated schoolmen were Englishmen; as Alexander de Hales, styled the "Irrefragable," who died at Paris in 1245; John Duns

<sup>1</sup> Craik, i. p. 144.

Scotus, who died at Cologne in 1308, remarkable for the vigor and penetration of his thought; and William Ockam, a pupil of the latter, and called the "Invincible." The questions they discussed belong rather to philosophy than to literature, but have a value for us, as affecting the habits of thought and culture, in which Langlande, Wycliffe, and Chaucer were to have their training, preparatory to their great labors in behalf of English letters.

The influence of this philosophy, its methods of treating all theological and moral questions, its nice distinctions, divisions and subdivisions of topics, long prevailed in English writing. Its influence is very marked on the language of the great theological writers of the seventeenth century, as Howe, Owen, Charnock, and others, inducing in them a prolixity and cumbrousness of style that stand much in the way of their legitimate influence upon the mind of modern times. In fact there was only here and there a writer that could emancipate himself from this hereditary method of treating theological or philosophical subjects, till the time of Dryden at the close of the seventeenth century.

The properly theological literature, which was composed in the Latin tongue, had very little influence upon English character or on the English language. The most eminent writers were often foreigners, having little sympathy with English ideas or English habits; they wrote too for a limited class, not for the people at all. Though the works of some of them, as of Anselm, for instance, have been much admired for their subtilty of thought, and read by a larger public in these latter days than in his own time, yet they are of little moment to our present inquiry.



Of more account were the Latin poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, charged with satire and often invective against the clergy and the church. During the reign of John political subjects began to be treated in the same way, first in Latin, and ere long in Norman French, and still later, in the reigns of the Edwards, the vernacular language was used with great freedom for this purpose. These poems, from a limited audience at first, in due time came to be popular poetry, and not only a means of expressing the popular sentiment, but of cultivating the native language.

Of little value as the Latin literature may be to the present age, it is worthy of notice as an element of culture in the Norman period, and in the preparation of the English mind to develop a new language and a new literature at the fitting time.

But the native literature of the Normans was destined to have the greatest influence upon the new language. This was made up mainly of poetry and Romance. The earliest productions in French literature were given to the world from the courts of the Norman kings of England. For near two centuries, the French language was best cultivated in England, while the disordered condition of political affairs in France, in consequence of weak and inefficient princes, stood in the way of much attention to literature. To this culture in England, is probably due the fact, that the northern of the two French dialects eventually superseded the other. Both belonged, like the Spanish and Italian, to what was called the Romance language, which was a sort of corrupt Latin, from the blending of the northern languages of the barbarian conquerors with the Latin tongue.

The southern dialect, often called the language of

Provence, flourished only about a century, when it degenerated into a mere provincial dialect, still existing in the south of France, though much changed from what it was in the twelfth century, when the favorite vehicle of love and song, the language of popular literature.

Something of the peculiar character of the northern French poetry was due of course to the Scandinavian origin of the Normans; yet more to the old Celtic poetry of Brittany or Armorica, of which Normandy was a part. From the latter the Normans derived the materials of many of their popular songs, and nearly all the substance of their tales of Romance. The Normans, even if some remnants of the old British population did not unite with them as one people, were not unwilling to accept the tales which recounted their struggles against their common enemies of the Saxon race.

Henry I., surnamed the "Scholar," and his Queen, were celebrated for their patronage of the Norman poets, at the opening of the twelfth century. The earliest productions of these poets, so far as known, were based on Latin originals. But they soon turned their attention to English, or more strictly to old British subjects. The most famous of these writers is Master Wace. He translated into Romance verse the Latin History of Geoffrey of Monmouth. It extends to upwards of 15,000 lines of eight syllabled verse, and contains many things not recorded in Geoffrey. His other work was called "*Roman du Rou*," or Romance of Rollo, though he brings down his narrative of the Norman Dukes to the sixteenth year of Henry II. There are in this some 17,000 lines.

But by far the most important works of this period in their results upon the English language and literature,

were the Romances of the San Greal, and the Round Table, the Arthurian Romance, as it is sometimes called. The different authors who have investigated this subject are not agreed in their results, further than to attribute these various stories to a British origin, for their substance, and their form and variety to the skill of various Norman writers, who wrote without fear of criticism, either of the facts they professed to narrate, or of the style in which their works were executed. The San Greal, according to the common story of the old Romance, derived from some of the apocryphal gospels, was the plate from which Christ ate his last supper, and was appropriated by Joseph of Arimathea. It was endowed with a great variety of wonderful attributes to suit the ignorance and superstition of the dark ages, and played a prominent part in the stories of Arthur and his knights. Arthur was the hero of British story, who by powers human and superhuman, the centre of the strangest adventures, struggled for the defence of his native Britain. I shall quote Wright, given in Craik,<sup>1</sup> as on the whole the most trustworthy of those who have written on the subject.

“Walter Mapes was distinguished as a writer in the Anglo-Norman language, as well as in Latin. It is to him we owe a large portion of the cycle of the Romances of the Round Table, in the earliest form in which they are known. This first series of these romances consists of the Roman de St. Graal, or the history of the Graal before its pretended arrival in Britain, brought by Joseph of Arimathea; of the Roman de Merlin; of the Roman de Lancelot du Lac; of the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 124.

Quête du St. Graal, which is a sequel to the adventures of Lancelot; and of the death of King Arthur, forming the Roman de la Mort Arthur. The three latter were the work of Mapes, as we learn from the concluding paragraph of the Mort Arthur, and from a later writer of another branch of the series, Helie de Borron, who completed the Roman de Tristam, in the reign of Henry III. These authorities appear to intimate that Mapes translated his romances from a Latin original, which is distinctly stated in some of the manuscripts; but we have no other evidence of the existence of such an original, and it is probable that a great part of the incidents of the story was the work of the writer's own imagination, the whole being founded on popular legends then floating about."

Wright further adds, that the manuscripts containing these romances belong to the latter half of the thirteenth, or the first part of the fourteenth century. It is believed, however, that these metrical romances in the French tongue were written freely in England, as well as in France, during the whole of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were often referred to Latin originals, or to pretended and real historical sources, in order to obtain greater credit with their readers; and towards the latter portion of the time they began to be written in prose, because prose was thought to be true, while verse had been found false. For centuries these stories, made up of the strangest and most incredible as well as incongruous material, half heathen, half Christian, with scenes and characters of classic story brought into juxtaposition with northern legends, mediæval superstition, and Arab fiction,—the strangest medley imaginable, yet often wrought up with some little humor, and

power of description, though oftenest of the coarsest morality, — obtained general currency among the reading classes, as well as among the common people in England. They have an interest for us in this connection as showing the condition of the popular mind and heart, and as a means of culture for the French language, which was soon to furnish so many words and thoughts to the native idiom.

In regard to the transition from verse to prose, it may be observed that verse was the only form in which the romances were written down to the end of the twelfth century. In the thirteenth, a few appeared in prose; and it became the common form before the close of the fourteenth, so that many of the old metrical romances were recast to appear in prose, in order to retain their hold on the popular mind. These French prose romances do not seem to have been very current in England, but to have given place rather to English composition upon the same subject-matter.

In their own day the chronicles of Froissart were reckoned among the French prose romances. The fact shows that even in his time romance was not regarded as properly fiction, but laid claims to truthful history. This old chronicler shared largely in the popular love of the marvellous, and is more trustworthy as a painter of manners and character than as a truthful historian. His chronicle is "certainly the truest and most lively picture that any writer has bequeathed to us of the spirit of a particular era; it shows 'the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure.' In a higher than the literal sense, the most apocryphal incidents of this most splendid and imaginative of gossips are full of truth; they cast more light upon the actual men and manners that are de-

scribed, and bring back to life more of the long-buried past than the most careful details of any other historian.”<sup>1</sup>

Froissart wrote for a French audience, — for the court and the nobility, — of war and chivalry, fêtes and tournaments, of high-born dames and noble ladies. There is nothing English or Saxon in him. Yet his work is of the utmost value to us, to show the spirit of one portion of our mixed English blood, and that just at the point of union with the Saxon branch. The spirit of chivalry never ran higher than in the days of Edward III. and the Black Prince; and it had great influence upon the course of English thought and English literature. Spenser’s “*Faërie Queene*” at a later day was representative of the spirit of chivalry, when the reality had just enough gone by to become a fitting theme for poetry and romance. Froissart has been fortunate in having found a translator in Lord Berners, at that state of the English language most nearly correspondent to the French of his original, and therefore the best adapted to give an English equivalent for the French chronicles.

We have thus endeavored to point out the influence of the Normans upon the English language and character, through their associations and spoken language, and by their intellectual culture in the two directions in which it was displayed, through Latin scholarship and literature, and the native Norman. After the fourteenth century, and the union of Norman and Saxon in the English character and language, the proper influence of France and of the French is to be regarded rather as a foreign influence, as much so as the Spanish or Italian. The French and the English became entirely separate in

<sup>1</sup> Craik, i. p. 169.

interests, and to a great degree in tastes and habits of thought ; and have, perhaps, been arrayed in arms against each other oftener, and for longer periods than any other nations of the old world.

From this time no new physical elements have been added to the English blood or character. Whatever new intellectual traits may have made their appearance, have been called out by foreign literature, by culture at home, or by such political conditions and circumstances as were fitted to develop them. The American branch of the family has received greater additions from foreign sources, and has exhibited to some extent a peculiar national character as the result, — though more is probably due to the free institutions which have allowed the freest range to all peculiarities of individual character, and to the largest enterprise in all directions of human thought. It is not strange, therefore, that marked differences should already appear, if not so fully at present in the language, yet in the general tone and spirit of American as distinguished from English literature.

## CHAPTER VII.

## EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Distinct National Spirit and Language — Early Literary Works — Layamon — Edition of Sir Francis Madden — Philological Value — Verse — “Ancren Riwe” — Vocabulary — “The Ormulum” — Dr. White’s Edition — Orthography — Traces of Norman Influence — Marsh’s Estimate of the Work — The Proclamation of Henry III. — The Romance of Alexander — “The Owl and Nightingale” — “Surtees Psalter” — “Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester” — “The Geste of Kyng Horn” — Old Sermons from “Reliquiæ Antiquæ” — Most important Grammatical Changes of the Thirteenth Century — Vocabulary according to Coleridge’s Glossarial Index.

UNTIL the middle of the fourteenth century, there was nothing in the native literature that was really distinctive, or possessing national traits, or imbued with the national spirit. The various works which have come down to us, both in prose and verse, are of value rather as showing the condition and progressive development of the language than for any truly literary merit. Any discussion, however, of these works in the latter sense is foreign to our present purpose; yet some more particular reference is necessary in order to show the condition of the language. The most important of these works are “The Brut” of Layamon, “The Ormulum,” “The Ancren Riwe,” “Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle,” and one or two romances and poems. For an extended and careful notice of these



works, with copious extracts accompanied with valuable notes, the reader is referred to Marsh's Lectures, Second Series, and to the larger work of Craik. A brief outline is all that can here be attempted, and as only a part of the works referred to are accessible to the writer, this outline will, in part, be derived from the authors just named.

The work of Layamon has a philological interest from its marking the boundary-line, so to speak, between the Saxon and Old English. By some writers it is classed on one side, and by some on the other. It is best regarded as marking the transition. It is only since 1847 that this work has been accessible to the majority of English scholars, through the pains-taking labors of Sir Francis Madden, Keeper of the MSS. of the British Museum. He has carefully edited the work, and published it in three octavo volumes, with a valuable preface, glossary, and notes. It passes by the name of Layamon's Brut, and is a poetical paraphrase of the Brut of Wace, a French versification of the Latin history of Geoffrey of Monmouth. As Wace enlarged upon his original, so Layamon has enlarged upon his, making his work more than double in contents by additions of his own invention, by episodes derived from current traditions, and by materials gleaned from such other sources as were accessible to him. Wace's work is comprised in some 15,000 lines; Layamon's in 32,250.

Layamon was no servile copyist. He possessed much imagination of his own, and often improves upon his author in the beauty and power of his description, and the addition of striking incidents. This makes his work much more like an original composition, and adds greatly to its philological value.

All that is known of the author is contained in a few lines in the preface of his work, from which we learn that he was a priest of a church at Ernley, on the banks of the Severn, in Worcestershire. It is supposed that he wrote his work between the years 1180 and 1207, perhaps completing it in the latter year. There are two copies of the work in MS., the one just cited, as the author left it, and a copy slightly abridged, made, it is supposed, about fifty years later. The second MS. has been injured, and is defective in some parts. Both were printed by the editor in parallel columns, with a running translation at the foot of the page in modern English. The value of the second MS. depends upon the changes of grammatical forms and in the use of words, which had taken place in the interval of the fifty years. In the later text, we find much less adherence to the grammatical forms of the old Saxon, and many forms coming into use which afterwards became fixed in the English tongue. The gender of nouns, for instance, in the earlier text, follows the Anglo-Saxon; in the later, it is often neglected. The genitive of proper names in *es* of the earlier text is generally expressed by the pronoun *his* in the later; *Arthures lond* by *Arthur his lond*. Again the dual of the pronoun in the earlier text disappears in the later; so too the final *n* of the infinitive. In the earlier, the usual ending of the present participle is *ende* or *inde*, and only one instance of *inge*; in the later, both are found about equally. Yet more remarkable is the fact, that many words and phrases in the earlier text had become obsolete or unintelligible to the later writer.

The blunder of the copyist in one instance, in repeating eighteen lines, answers a valuable purpose, in consequence of the variations made, showing that very little

reliance can be placed on the *verbatim et literatim* accuracy of the transcribers of the thirteenth century, or what is more probable, that the language was so unsettled as to make such variations of no account.

This work shows, most conclusively, that the change of the Saxon into English was purely an organic change of the Saxon itself, helped on, it may be, by the presence of the Norman, but not as the result, in the first instance, of union with it. Considering that Layamon translated from a French work, it is certainly remarkable that not more than fifty words in the earlier text are derived from the French, including some that may have come directly from the Latin, and some in use before the time of Layamon. "Of this number," the editor observes, "the later text retains some thirty, and adds to them rather more than forty, not found in the earlier version; so that if we reckon merely words of French origin in both texts, containing more than 56,800 lines, we shall be able to form a tolerably correct estimate, how little the English language was really affected by foreign converse even as late as the middle of the thirteenth century." Another circumstance of importance to be noted here, is the colloquial character of much of the work, rendering it especially valuable as conveying to us the current speech of the writer's time.

The form of the verse is characteristic of the time, partly alliterative like the old Saxon, and partly of rhyming couplets. Many couplets occur in which both alliteration and rhyme are employed, whilst others have neither. The latter probably depended wholly on accent. The author slides from one form to the other quite at pleasure. There is, however, more of alliteration than of rhyme, even including the imperfect or as-

sonant terminations. Yet considering the unsettled condition of the language, the form is one that reflects great credit upon the author as an honest effort to give form to what was wellnigh formless.

The influence of this work in fixing the character of the language, notwithstanding its merits, was far less than it would have been, but for the subject-matter. Its object was to perpetuate the memory and exploits not of a still flourishing race, but rather of one passed away; it was not therefore national or patriotic, like the works of Homer, for instance, and failed of awakening a general interest, and so of its legitimate influence as a literary work of real merit.

The "Ancren Riwe," or the Anchoresses' Rule, was probably written about the same time as the work of Layamon. The subject-matter of this too, was not of a kind to gain for it any wide influence, and is of interest only as another witness to the character of the language. It was a treatise on the duties of monastic life, addressed to three ladies who with their servants, or lay sisters, appear to have constituted a religious house at Tarente in Dorsetshire. It is in prose, and thus has a greater philological value, as better illustrative of the language of common life. It retains quite as many of the old Saxon forms as Layamon's Brut. The spelling is of a very unsettled character. The moods and tenses are both changed, and in many words not at all from the old forms. The most noticeable difference between this work and that of Layamon is found in the vocabulary. "The quantity of matter in the 'Ancren Riwe,'" observes Marsh,<sup>1</sup> "exclusive of Latin quotation, is less than half of that in Layamon, but the glossary to the former con-

<sup>1</sup> Lectures, Second Series, pp. 170, 171.

tains twice as many French words as Layamon, and yet omits a large number because they were thought too familiar to need explanation. Much of this difference in vocabulary is doubtless to be ascribed to the fact that the Ancren Riwele, treating of religious subjects, naturally adopted the dialect of the Romish ascetic discipline, which was in great part of Latin derivation." Some of the forms of words would indicate a later, and some an earlier date than the work of Layamon. The arrangement of words, however, in the Ancren Riwele, is almost modern; due probably to its colloquial character, since the spoken language at all times was probably far less inflected and consequently more like modern English in its syntactical arrangement, than the written.

The Ormulum, so named, the author says, because Orm wrote it, is esteemed one of the most valuable works of our old English literature. It belongs to the early part of the thirteenth century, and was written by a monk of the Augustine order, at the request of a brother monk, and consists of a series of Homilies or practical inferences from those portions of the New Testament which were read in the daily service of the church. They are composed in metre, with occasional alliteration, without rhyme, and in English for the spiritual improvement of his countrymen. They possessed evidently too much genuine religious sentiment for the age, and failed of popularity. In fact there is but a single copy in MS. extant, and that is probably the author's copy. This is but a fragment of the work, though extending to some 20,000 lines. The metre is remarkably well preserved, and what is more remarkable still is the uniform though rather peculiar orthography. In these respects it is in advance of other literary works of the century, while

the Saxon words and forms blended with English sufficiently indicate the real time of its production. It was first printed, carefully edited with notes and a glossary, in 1852, by Robert Meadows White, D.D., sometime Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford.

The principal peculiarity of its orthography is the doubling of the consonants after short vowels, evidently with the design to indicate the current pronunciation. It is worthy of note that the quantity thus indicated has remained to a great degree unchanged; and that the method of spelling adopted by the author for the express purpose of showing the proper sounds of the letters, is not in favor of the diphthongal pronunciation of the long vowels.

The vocabulary contains but few traces of Norman influence, and but few words of Latin or ecclesiastical origin; it has some Scandinavian words and idioms, which have led critics to assign the residence of the writer to the eastern or north-eastern portion of England. The syntax is quite modern in its character, so much so as to present little difficulty to an English reader. The author seems to have been as careful of his syntax as of his words, and in these respects to have shown a care and a taste quite in advance of his supposed time. "In fact," says Marsh,<sup>1</sup> "the dialect of the *Ormulum* is more easily mastered than that of '*Piers Ploughman*,' which was written more than a century later, and it contains fewer words of unknown or doubtful signification. It is moreover, especially interesting as a specimen of the character and internal tendencies of the Anglo-Saxon language as affected by more advanced civilization and culture, but still uncorrupted by any considerable mixture of

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, *First Series*, pp. 110, 111.

foreign ingredients; for we discover no traces of the Norman element in the vocabulary and but few in the syntax of this remarkable work. The vocabulary consists of about 2,300 words, exclusive of proper names and inflected forms. Among these I am unable to find a single word of Norman French origin, and scarcely ten which were taken directly from the Latin." And hardly less important is the fact stated by Marsh, that the whole number of words from foreign sources previously introduced into the Anglo-Saxon, and found in the *Ormulum*, does not exceed sixty,—showing the remarkable purity of the language and the character of the changes it was undergoing.

The proclamation of Henry III. in 1258, though brief, containing in all only some 300 words, and only about 140 different words, is of great value, in showing the condition of the language at a certain date. It shows no trace of Norman influence in its vocabulary, save in its proper names and official titles, but it shows how the old grammatical system and the structure of the period had already changed into very nearly the modern form. Many of the inflectional endings appear wholly, or in part, but without their original influence on the structure of the sentence.

The reader is referred to Marsh's Lectures, Second Series, for a full notice and criticism of several other memorials of the English of the thirteenth century, as "The Romance of Alexander," "The Owl and the Nightingale," "The Geste of Kyng Horn," "The Surtees Psalter," and "The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester." The first of these works exhibits a larger influx of French words than we have hitherto met, sometimes as many as six per cent. of the whole number, while the syntax

is strictly English. The Owl and the Nightingale is a rhyming poem of about 1800 verses in octosyllabic metre. It is noted as the first narrative poem of a wholly imaginative character in the native tongue, and for the smoothness and finish of its verse. English in its subject, it is also eminently English in its language. A fine edition of this poem has been published by the Percy Society, edited by Thomas Wright, with some other short religious poems of the same period. In the Geste of Kyng Horn the number of French words is only about two per cent.; in Robert of Gloucester, four or five, though many words of this class were first introduced by him into the current vocabulary. The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester is worthy of notice as the most ancient professed history in the English language. It begins as usual with the siege of Troy, and is brought down to the death of Henry III. in 1272.

In the "*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*," edited by Wright and Halliwell, are preserved a specimen of some English sermons of the beginning of the thirteenth century, that compare well with the *Ancren Riwe*, in point of English idiom, vocabulary, and syntax. When the preacher has but a single thought to express, or at most only two or three, in as many phrases, the idiom is quite modern. But sometimes the sentences are prolonged by connections, and different phrases are strung along quite in the manner of an inexperienced schoolboy.

Aside from the general tendency to simplify inflections and orthography, the two most important grammatical changes that may be regarded as becoming fixed in the thirteenth century were the plural of verbs in *en* instead of the old Saxon endings in *ð* (*th*) and *on*; and the use of the plural pronoun instead of the singular in



addressing a single person.<sup>1</sup> The entire vocabulary of the English language of the thirteenth century, so far as known from its printed literature, consists according to Coleridge's Glossarial Index of about 8000 words, of which some twelve per cent. are of Latin or Romance derivation, though not more than five per cent. are found employed by any one writer. Of course the number of English words in current use was much greater than the number here indicated, and Marsh has pointed out some that Coleridge overlooked.

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, Second Series, p. 258.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

Rhymed Chronicle of Robert Mannyng — Vocabulary — The Forms of the Pronouns — Relation to Ballad Poetry — Theories as to Robin Hood — Thierry — Name of a Cycle — Metrical Romance — Time and Popularity — Late Editions — References — Influence on the Language — Political Poems — Variety of Measure — Wright's Edition — Tendency to form Inflections — Example from the "*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*" — Date to mark the Rise and Development of a genuine English Language — Connection with the National Life — Sources whence Romance words were Introduced — First English Poet — Lawrence Minot — Poems — Verse — Alliteration falls into Disuse — Recent Revival of it — The first great Prose Writer — Sir John Mandeville — Character of his Work — Philological Value — Orthography — Robert Langlande — Estimation in which his Poem was held — Verse — Spirit — Extract from the Sermon of Reason — The Creed of "*Piers Ploughman*."

THE first production that merits our notice at the beginning of the fourteenth century is the rhymed chronicle of Robert Mannyng, or Robert de Brunne. This work is a translation, the first part of the Brut of Wace, down to the death of Cadwallader in 689, and the second part of the Anglo-Norman chronicle of Peter de Langtoft, a continuation of the first down to the death of Edward I. The style of this work is said by Marsh to be superior to that of Robert of Gloucester in ease, though not in grace of expression. Though little can be said of

the literary merits of the work, it has a philological value, as showing some changes in the language. The vocabulary is enlarged by new Romance words, and the old Saxon ending of the third person singular of the verb in *ð* (*th*) is changed to the modern form in *s*; and the forms of the pronouns are more as in later English,—*scho*, afterwards changed to *she*, and the plural forms, *thei* and *ther*.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell sees in the form of the verse traces of the ballad poetry of the time, into which the old metrical romances became resolved. It is certain that ballad poetry was now widely prevalent especially the famous cycle of the Robin Hood ballads. The allusion to these poems in the “Piers Ploughman” of Langlande, as better known to idle fellows than pious songs, is evidence of their popularity.

Of the many disagreeing theories in regard to the historical character of Robin Hood, two may be named,—that of Thierry, who regards him as the hero of the Saxon serfs, that continued their resistance to the Norman invaders, even to the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, and therefore was specially dear to the old English heart, and justly celebrated in patriotic song; the other, from the variety of dates assigned him, ranging through a period of not less than three hundred years, from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the fifteenth century, denies the existence of any such historical personage, and assigns the name only to a cycle of poems illustrative of one form of English life, that, perhaps, which still delights in field-sports and rustic merry-makings. It is possible that the true theory will harmonize the two, by uniting the more important elements of both. In any case the value of

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, Second Series, p. 235.

these ballads, as a means of maintaining a true native feeling, a genuine home, national sentiment, and of a language among the people best expressive of it, and which no foreign influences could ever suppress or stifle, can hardly be over-estimated. Some value also should be given to the poetic discipline to which the language was thus subjected; yet of far greater account was the preservation of the true flavor of the Saxon element in our speech and character. It thus contributed greatly to the revival of poetry, and to the study of old English at the close of the last century, which still continues with the happiest results upon the purity of the language.

Other important agents in developing the language of the next fifty years, preparatory to the fully awakened English sentiment and nationality, and to the creation of a distinctively English literature, were the metrical romances, the political songs, and many short satirical poems.

As already noticed, the French metrical romances, so popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, during the latter part of the thirteenth gradually gave way to productions of a similar character, sometimes merely translations, in the native tongue. English metrical romance was at the height of its popularity during the first part of the fourteenth century, and continued to constitute the larger part of the popular literature for more than a hundred years, then gave place to prose romance, which continued to hold the popular favor till the awakening of a purer religious sentiment by the Reformation led to its neglect. Since they have become of value for philological study, a great number of the old metrical romances have been offered to the public, carefully edited by different scholars, as Ritson, Ellis, Weber, and others,

and by different learned societies. In this way some seventy or more have been published, ranging in size from three hundred to eight thousand lines. Of these a large portion belong to the early part of the fourteenth century, while some, perhaps, were composed in the next century.

For detailed sketches of English metrical romance, see "Percy's Reliques of early English Poetry," the first volume of "Warton's History of English Poetry," Ritson's dissertation in the first volume of his "Ancient English Metrical Romances;" so Ellis, Tyrwhitt, Marsh, and Craik.

When it is remembered that by far the largest part of these romances were translations from the French, it is not surprising that the French forms of versification should have been adopted, and that many French words should have been introduced in order to complete the measure of the lines, if for no other reason. The wonder rather is that so few words were introduced from this source, and that so much facility was shown in the use and accommodation of English words to this versification. Although the literary merits of these old romances are not of a very high order, yet some of them, as the one entitled "Richard Cœur de Lion," edited by Weber, are by no means deficient even in this respect. They ought not to be overlooked in their influence upon the language, in refining its uncouth orthography, and developing its poetic capabilities.

The political and other poems of the time have more of an English spirit, and are more worthy of esteem as the first essays of a national literature. The variety of metre is very great, so as to furnish examples of almost every form of the poetic measures afterwards employed.

No better discipline could have been devised for the nascent language and literature than was thus afforded.

The political songs, edited by Wright, and printed for the Camden Society, contain specimens of English songs of the successive reigns of Henry III., Edward I. and II., that are finely illustrative of the changes the language was passing through. One of these, composed upon the death of Edward I., shows a great variety in the grammatical forms of the verbs, especially in the singular number; the old forms still in use, and the new, as it were, in competition. The poem on the king's breaking his confirmation of Magna Charta shows a decided change in this short interval in favor of the later forms. In different stanzas are found different forms for the plural of the present tense of the verb; in one ending in "*en*," and in another, as in later English, according to the convenience of the measure. The time of Edward II. was not favorable to literary production, or the development of a national spirit, and little advance was made.

A few writers of this period were in the habit of uniting words, particularly the negatives and pronouns, with their verbs, much as we may suppose the inflections in grammar were originally introduced. This practice was begun in the preceding century, and was continued through the fourteenth, but never became universal, and was effectually checked by the usage of the great authors and by the introduction of printing. Such combinations can only arise in a spoken language, and require time to be so completely fixed by contraction as to become permanent.

The following extracts are from an interlocutory poem, supposed, from the writing of the manuscript, to have

been written at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and printed in the "*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*"<sup>1</sup> already cited : —

"*Clericus*. — Damishel, reste<sup>2</sup> well.

*Puella*. — Sir, welcome, by Saint Michel.

*Clericus*. — Wer esty<sup>3</sup> Sire, wer esty dame?

*Mome Ellwis*. — A, Son, wat saystu<sup>4</sup>?"

This method of agglutination, as philologists term it, was frequently resorted to by Langlande, but soon after fell into disuse. Indeed, he was the only author of much note, that seems to have practised it.

The year 1350 is chosen as the most convenient to mark the rise and development of a genuine English language. Of course such an event is not the result of a single year, but of many ; and this date is given as, on the whole, the nearest point of time that can well be given. In the notice of the last fifty years, attention has been called to the busy preparation in progress to develop a language and literature, essentially English in their character ; and all that was needed was the full hearty manifestation of national life, that should take up the great mass of material, and mould it into form and beauty by a living organic process. The material so taken up and transfused with life was to be neither Saxon, nor Norman, nor Latin, but English : the metal wrought out in many mines was to become the current coin of the realm, bearing the national insignia, and to share in the national glories.

<sup>1</sup> I. 145.

<sup>2</sup> rest thee.

<sup>3</sup> is thy.

<sup>4</sup> sayest thou.

"Whatever existed," says Marsh,<sup>1</sup> "in the English tongue, whether by translation or by original composition, now became a part of the general patrimony of the English people, and there, as everywhere else, the learning, the poetry, the philosophy, which had been slowly gathered on the summits of social life, and had been the peculiar nutriment of the favored classes, now flowed down to a lower level, and refreshed, as with the waters of a fountain of youth, the humble ranks of the English people. Native poets, composing original works in their own tongue, would naturally use the poetic diction in which the productions of French literature had been clothed, in assuming an English dress; for these were their only vernacular models. But English rhymers were still generally acquainted with French, and that language, as we have seen, had already attained a culture which eminently fitted it for literary purposes, and made it, as the Latin has always been, a store-house of poetic wealth in words as well as in thought, and a convenient resource to versifiers who were in vain struggling to find adequate expressions in the vocabulary of Saxon English. The English middle classes, who were now for the first time admitted to the enjoyment of literary pleasures, accepted as a consecrated speech the dialect employed by their authors and translators, without inquiring into the etymology of its constituents, and thus, in the course of one generation, a greater number of French words were introduced into English verse, and initiated as lawful members of the poetical guild, than in nearly three centuries which had elapsed since the Norman conquest. The foreign matter became thoroughly assimilated nutriment to the speech, the mind, and the

<sup>1</sup> Second Series, pp. 265, 266.



heart of the fragmentary people who had now combined in an entire organized commonwealth; and though the newly-adopted Romance words were not indigenous, yet they were acknowledged and felt to be as genuine English as those whose descent from the Gothic stock was most unequivocal."

But it was not by poetry alone that Romance words were at this time introduced into the language. They were the common gift of the learned professions, of the various sciences, and trades, that all now shared in the newly-awakened national life, and all required a larger vocabulary. The sciences and trades that were now introduced from abroad brought in their own technical phraseology, soon to lose its technical character, and to enter into the common language of the time. In these ways, more than through the poets, were foreign words incorporated into the popular speech.

The first name in the new era is Lawrence Minot, who wrote a few short poems, ten or eleven in all, to celebrate the victories of Edward III. He is not unaptly styled by Campbell the Tyrtæus of English song. His poems breathe a truly martial and at the same time English spirit; and exhibit more of elegance and force of expression than had hitherto been attained. They are written in not less than ten different measures, and, true to the spirit of national unity, unite Saxon alliteration and Norman rhyme. This example of uniting so radically unlike forms of versification was not followed. Langlande and his school adhered to the old Saxon rules, while Chaucer and his followers adopted Romance metres. But the result was not long doubtful. After Langlande and his immediate successors and followers, alliteration was neglected, save as an occasional orna-

ment. It is nevertheless so true to the spirit of the Saxon element of our language, that, with the revival of a more thoroughly English taste, during the last half-century, has come quite a tendency to revive in part this old essential to the verse of our ancestors. Not a few of our best modern poets resort to its use to add a charm to their works, among whom may be reckoned Tennyson and Mrs. Browning.

The first great prose writer in the new era was Sir John Mandeville. His work was published in 1354, and claimed to be a record of travels in the East, but well stored with miracles from legends, and marvellous tales from romantic fiction, duly declared authentic by the sanction of the Pope. His work seems to have had much the same place in his day as the "Tales of the Arabian Knights" among the children of a later generation. It had a great circulation. Of no book, with the exception of the Scriptures, are more copies to be found in manuscript of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This fact gives it for us a great philological value, not only as showing the condition of the language, but as an important means of giving currency to words the author first introduced into English. The volume edited by Halliwell, and printed at London in 1839, contains but 316 coarsely printed octavo pages, including the numerous illustrations. "Although the style and grammatical structure of Mandeville are idiomatic, yet the proportion of words of Latin and French origin employed by him in his straightforward, unadorned narrative, is greater than that found in the works of Langlande, Chaucer, Gower, or any other English poet of that century."<sup>1</sup> And what is the more remarkable

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, Second Series, p. 268.

is the fact that so large a part of the words he thus introduced into the language have retained their place. Out of the one hundred and seventy-four new words which Marsh finds in about an eighth part of the volume, only six or seven are not in use now and in the same sense. At the same rate he must have added in this small volume not less than fourteen hundred words of Latin and Romance origin to the spoken English of his time. It is undoubtedly true that Mandeville did more than any one else to introduce this class of words into the language. His familiarity with French and Latin, and lack of acquaintance with the stores of English speech, in consequence of his absence from the country and intercourse with those who for the most part used French, and the plain good sense of the man in choosing a simple unaffected style, at once explain the number and the fitness of the words he thus brought into the language. The orthography is in some respects more modern, and in others less so than is to be found in other works of the time. The pronoun *their* is not *ther*, as in some writers before him, but the older, *her* or *here*. The German *sch* is found for *sh*, and the Saxon character, which in some authors is written as *g* and *y*, is invariably *z*, as *zee* for *ye* or *gee*, and *azen* for *agen*; so *zif* for *gif*, the later *if*. Yet on the whole the author is more easily read by those little acquainted with old English than any that have preceded him, and than some of the later poets.

The earliest known original poem of any extent was the work of Robert Langlande, as it is generally supposed, though some doubt remains as to the real author. This was given to the world between 1360 and 1370, and called "Visions of Piers Ploughman, or Peter the

Ploughboy." Professing to give a series of visions that passed before him while asleep on the Malvern hills, he indulges in a vigorous satire upon the abuses of the Papacy, the dissolute lives of the Romish clergy, and the corruption of society. The work was widely popular, its allegory well fitted to interest the common mind, and its general influence eminently favorable to the efforts soon to be made by Wycliffe and other reformers. So valuable was it esteemed in this respect that three editions were published two centuries later to aid the Protestant Reformation. There was, however, nothing directly Protestant in the work, but a calm allegorical exposition of the evils of society, with a view to reveal their causes, with just enough of humor and satire to give interest and zest to the story, and to make it popular.

The verse is without rhyme, and the system of alliteration is strictly followed. This sometimes interferes with the freedom and ease of the verse, and occasions the use of archaic forms of expression, and of many words which have since become obsolete. As would be expected from the verse, there are less Romance words than in *Mandeville*, while the proportion of foreign words is about the same as in Chaucer, and the syntax generally is not much unlike his. While the moods and the tenses of the verbs had acquired nearly their present force, their inflection was more according to the old Saxon forms. But the general spirit of the work, the thought, is English, rather than Saxon or Norman. It is on the whole a hearty English work, and as such had in its day, and still deserves, an honorable place in the regards of men.

The following brief extracts from the "Sermon of Reason," Wright's edition, Vol. I., pp. 79 and 80, will

show at once the spirit of the author, his English idiom, and use of Saxon forms: —

“ And sithen be prechede prelates,  
And preestes togideres,  
That ye prechen to the peple,  
Preve it on yowselve,  
And dooth it in dede,  
It shall drawe yow to goode ;  
If ye leven as ye leren us,  
We shul leve yow the bettre.

And ye that seke Seynt James  
And Seyntes of Rome,  
Seketh Seynt Truthe ;  
For he may save yow alle.”

This passage, however, does not accurately represent the orthography of the author, as Wright's edition follows that of Crowley, published in 1550, much altered by the printer.

Another work, in the same style substantially, was published some thirty years later, called the “ Creed of Piers Ploughman.” This is believed to have been written by one of the followers of Wycliffe. In this Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage, but the representative of the English peasant rising up to judge and act for himself, — and the Church is the special object of assault. On this account the work was soon proscribed, and never obtained much circulation. In its essential features of language and style it is an imitation of the work of Langlande.

## CHAPTER IX.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY CONTINUED. — WYCLIFFE AND  
CHAUCER.

Character and Culture of John de Wycliffe — Translation of the Bible — Edition of Forshall and Madden — Reference to Marsh — Grammatical Changes — Chaucer — As a Literary Man — His English Heart — Services to the Language — Marsh's Opinion — Language of Chaucer — French words employed — Chaucer's Verse — The final *e* — Peculiarities in the forms of Verbs — General Simplification of the Language — No new Words from the Anglo-Saxon revived after this — The Process of Dialectic Regeneration — John Gower — Value of his Works to the Language — The Prose of the Fourteenth Century — Chaucer's Prose — Wycliffe — Sermon against Miracle Plays — The Language now settled — Limit of future Changes.

THE man who did the most for the religious culture of the people, and for the language as a means of expressing moral and religious sentiment, was John de Wycliffe. Possessed of an uncommonly fine mind that won him respect and admiration at the University, thoroughly disciplined in the scholastic culture, classic and philosophical, of his time, with a heart thoroughly devoted to the interests of religion, and a determined purpose that no opposition could intimidate, he was prepared as few men of any age could be, and at this, the best possible time for the developing language, to use it with power, and to

bring out its hidden stores of expression, or to add to them from the common treasures of Latin and Romance, as should be found necessary. The greatest work of Wycliffe and his followers who worked under his direction, was the translation of the Bible, now for the first time put into an English dress. This was widely circulated, and had great influence in forming the religious and theological dialect, that has in substance continued to the present time. This version furnished the language of the later versions of Tyndale and others, and finally of the standard version now in use. The New Testament is supposed to have been wholly from Wycliffe's hand, and is of more uniform diction and grammar, and had a proportionate greater influence. Wycliffe died in 1384, and these translations are supposed to have been made but two or three years previous. It is only since 1850 that the entire version has been offered to the public from the press. For this the world is indebted to the painstaking labors of two English scholars, — Forshall and Madden. Two different texts are printed, the older of 1380, and a later of 1390, revised by Purley. The revision was carefully made, and has a value from showing the marked progress of the language during this short period.

The reader is referred to Marsh's Lectures, Second Series, for a more minute examination of these versions, and the influence and character of Wycliffe. One or two grammatical changes only will here be noticed. The present participle ending in *ende* assumed the form of *ing*, while these versions were in progress, which it has since preserved. The older versions have the old, the later the new, form. The Saxon feminine ending *ster*, is changed to the Norman *esse*. In general, with some ex-

ceptions, the conjugation of the verbs in Wycliffe's translations corresponds very nearly with our own. Aside from the grammatical forms of interest to the scholar in tracing the changes of the language, these versions are interesting as a storehouse of hearty English words, and of the roots of many forms now in use, and as a means of reviving a true and vigorous speech.

The best representative of the language during the last quarter of the fourteenth century was undoubtedly the poet Chaucer, so deservedly called the Father of English literature. He was, in the strict sense of the word, a literary man. He had a thorough practical acquaintance with men of all grades, from the highest to the lowest, and had a hearty sympathy, as wide as was his acquaintance. At home and abroad, in the various relations of public and private life, in peace and in war, he had enjoyed opportunities of general culture, such as are the privilege of but few men. Add to this a mind of rare order, a true genius for poetry, a hearty love of whatever is beautiful in nature, or genial and noble in man, and we have an author of rarest accomplishments, and one who turned all to the best account. He had command of all the resources of the language, and a genuine English mind and heart to use them. He seemed to have anticipated the future greatness and glory of the English name, and to have devoted himself to the work of improving its language and literature with all the interest of a true patriot as well as of the accomplished scholar. He realized, too, better than most men — only as the highest order of literary men do — what is truly essential and therefore permanent in literature; and so he freely passed by, as unsuited to his purpose, many events and scenes that would have absorbed the thought and attention of ordi-



nary minds. For instance, in that age so much given to war and chivalry, he never writes a line in praise of either; he chooses rather themes of common and universal interest to mankind, and thus secured for himself his true place in the literary world.

Chaucer first employed himself in translating from the French into English some of the more popular works of French literature, and in this way prepared himself for original composition. Among these the most important was the "Romaunt of the Rose."

Considering the character of the existing English and French languages, it has been noted as a proof of Chaucer's English sentiment, that he introduced so few French words into his translation. These were oftenest such as the necessities of his measure required, and in these cases he has often transferred rather than translated the rhymes. "Notwithstanding the necessity thus imposed upon Chaucer, as the translator of highly imaginative poems into a tongue hitherto without literary culture, and possessed of no special vocabulary conventionally dedicated to poetical use, he was very sparing in the employment of French words not belonging to the class which I have just referred to; and he shows exquisite taste and judgment in his selection from the vocabulary of both languages, whenever the constraint of metre and rhyme left him free to choose. Hence, though the 'Romaunt of the Rose,' and his other works of a similar character, are admirably faithful as translations, their diction, which is an anthology of the best words and forms of both languages, is more truly poetical than that of the originals. In the hands of Chaucer, the English language advanced, at one bound, to that superiority over the French, which it has ever since maintained as

a medium of the expression of poetical imagery and thought.”<sup>1</sup>

The language of Chaucer was thus the select English, or spoken language of his time, and the superiority of his mind is as clearly evinced in his choice words as in his poetic imagery. The two necessarily go together. The best and clearest thinkers are those who, other things being equal, use language in the best way, — in fact are the best thinkers often, because of their command of language, since words are necessary to thought. The French words employed by Chaucer, with the single exception referred to, were such as were already current, with a clearly defined sense in the English of his time.

These general remarks upon his diction will apply with full force to his greatest work, the “*Canterbury Tales*.” The subjects of these tales, the various characters introduced, were all eminently suited to the ends of true literature, and to the culture of the language. If Wycliffe developed its religious and theological diction, it was for Chaucer to set forth its poetical, and perhaps still more the dialect of social life, the common every-day speech of the people, and by the popularity of his works, to give it permanence. Subsequent poets and other writers seem to have fully appreciated the valuable services of Chaucer. His friend and disciple Occleve called him “the first finder of our fair language.” Lydgate, in the next generation, celebrates him as his master, as chief poet of Britain,

“He that was of making soverain,  
Whom all this lande of right ought prefer,  
Sith of our language he was the lode-ster.”

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, Second Series, pp. 389, 390.

And Spenser, two centuries later, hails him as "the well of English undefiled."<sup>1</sup>

Different critics are by no means agreed as yet upon the pronunciation of all the words employed by Chaucer in his verse, especially those ending in *e*. The disagreement is doubtless due, in great measure, to the want of a carefully revised edition, which should be made from the earliest existing manuscripts by an editor thoroughly at home in the forms of the language as then used, so that he would be competent to correct the many errors which have crept into the text from transcribing. The following notice of some of the peculiarities of Chaucer's language, as distinguished from our English of the present day, is taken mainly from Craik's Outlines,<sup>2</sup> with some slight change and abridgment.

First in regard to the *e* ending so many of his words, and often if not always forming a syllable which has now disappeared in great part from the spelling as well as from the pronunciation of the language. In words borrowed from the French it is, as pointed out by Tyrwhitt, the *e* feminine of that language, still retained in French spelling and prosody, though not now pronounced in English, and only written when its presence is necessary to indicate the sound of a preceding vowel or consonant. In nouns of native origin it is, in many cases, the representative or remnant of the old Saxon ending in *a*, *e*, or *u*, as *name* for *nama*, and retained to give the long sound to the preceding vowel. In other native nouns it is the *e* of the old dative singular, or genitive plural, or nominative plural in adjectives, or the sign of the definite form of the adjective, — the same in Saxon as in German, or of the adverb as distinguished from the

<sup>1</sup> See Craik, i. p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 105-107.

adjective, or of the superlative of the adjective as distinguished from the adverb. In many cases it may have been used simply to give the same sound to the preceding vowel.

Other peculiarities are the following:—

The substantive verb *to ben*, our *to be*, was inflected as is the singular of the indicative now; in the plural the form throughout was *ben* or *aren*. So in the imperfect the form was *weren*.

Our *to have* was *to haven*, or *to han*, inflected in the present by *have*, *havest* or *hast*, *haveth* or *hath*, and by *haven* or *han*, in the plural. Imperfect *hadde*, *haddest*, *hadde*, singular, and *hadden* in the plural.

So

	Singular.	Plural.
Present,	<i>shal</i>	<i>shullen</i>
	<i>wil</i> or <i>wol</i>	<i>willen</i> or <i>wollen</i>
	<i>can</i> or <i>con</i>	<i>connen</i>
	<i>may</i> or <i>mow</i>	<i>mowen</i>
Imperfect,	<i>shulde</i>	<i>shulden</i>
	<i>wolde</i>	<i>wolden</i>
	<i>coud</i>	<i>couden</i>
	<i>might</i> or <i>moughte</i>	<i>mighten</i> or <i>moughten</i> .

The pronoun *I* as at present, sometimes *Ich* or *Iche*; *ye* for the nominative, *you* for the accusative; *they*, sometimes *hi*, the old form *them*, usually *hem*, much like the colloquial “*em*,” and *their* was usually *hire*, pronounced as one syllable, which was also the form of the adjective pronoun *her*, and the accusative of the personal pronoun *she*.

The principle characteristics of the English of this period, as illustrated in Chaucer’s works in verse and prose, were the same that were to continue till the

present forms in use became fully settled, namely, the gradual dropping off of such of the old forms as remained, and the tendency to draw from the French and Latin. The original ending of the infinitive in *an* had been changed to *en*, and now often appeared in *e*. The inflection of the tenses was falling off, and occasionally the modern forms were employed. The final *e* in both verbs and nouns was often dropped in pronunciation, though still written for a time. The imperfect *lovede*, was pronounced, and erelong written *loved*. The poets, as Chaucer, felt at liberty to use both forms according to their convenience.

From this time forward, no new words were revived from the old Saxon speech, only such as were current in the popular speech, but not yet introduced into literary works, would occasionally be brought forward, but the additions were, for the most part, from foreign sources. Of the words used by Chaucer and Langlande, which have since become obsolete, the greater portion were those of native origin. The French or Romance words as foreign to the language were selected, or at least used with more care. Though thoroughly naturalized and welcomed to a hospitable home, there was evidently an instinctive feeling of race that was true to the vital assimilating power.

Of the other great poet, whose name is often mentioned with that of Chaucer, John Gower, little need be said in this connection. Inferior as a poet and a man to Chaucer, his influence was comparatively less; his language, where English, is inferior, more archaic, not up to the progressive spirit of his time. Only a portion of his works were in English. These were of value, however, to the written language, in consequence of the wide cir-

culatation of his works. In his own time, and in the next century, and even later, his "*Confessio Amantis*" was highly esteemed when Chaucer was neglected; just as at a later day Ben Jonson superseded Shakspeare.

- Though poetry was the popular form of literature in the fourteenth century, it was not altogether deficient in prose. The best specimen is doubtless that of Chaucer, as illustrated in his "*Persones Tale*." Some passages are quite racy, and show a fresh, hearty vigor, that is hardly surpassed during the next century. The language was used with no little power by Wycliffe and his followers, and in the political discussions of the time. A treatise against miracle plays, near the close of this century, printed in the "*Reliquiæ Antiquæ*," has a rude strength and vigor of thought that are worthy of our notice, but the language is evidently too much for the writer. He cannot handle it with ease, however earnest he may have been in his convictions.

The English language, considered as the result of various physical and intellectual elements, was now established. The changes subsequently made were due to causes already in operation and to such intellectual and moral influences as might be exerted on it from without. The rejection of inflections, and the reduction of its orthography to a similar and uniform system, continued for the next three centuries, steadily decreasing with the necessity in order to the greatest simplicity and power of individual words; while a true English idiom gradually became more and more flexible in the spoken language of the people. The latter process was disturbed by the revival of the classics and the introduction of a large number of Latin words at the time of the reformation, but only temporarily.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

General Spirit of this Century — James I. of Scotland — Lydgate — Bishop Pecock — Sir John Fortescue — Malory's *Morte Arthur* — Its Prose — The Paston Letters — William Caxton, the great English Printer — Character of the Works he printed — The Gallicisms of his Style — End of Old English — Extract from Hallam.

THE century succeeding Chaucer, the fifteenth, was little favorable to literature or to language in consequence of the civil dissensions of the times. The specimens of prose and verse extant show that the changes for the better, so rapid in the former period, were greatly hindered, yet not wholly so. A few names are worthy of mention, as James I. of Scotland, Lydgate, Bishop Pecock, and Chief Justice Fortescue. The first two exhibit a good command of the laws of versification, and James I. has a good deal of merit as a poet, though his orthography was not such as to improve our English diction. Lydgate was a man of great learning, well versed in French and Italian literature, and a most prolific writer. In this way he did something to improve the language by additions to its vocabulary. Most critics, however, will hardly concur with Warton in saying that "he is the first of our writers, whose style is clothed with that

perspicuity, in which English phraseology appears at this day to an English reader."<sup>1</sup>

The work of Pecoock, "The Repression of over much blaming of the clergy," was written about 1450; and intended as a defence of the church against the Wycliffites. It is said by Marsh to be "if not the first, yet certainly the ablest specimen of philosophical argumentation which had yet appeared in the English tongue." The style and the vocabulary are so much like the writings of Wycliffe in the former century, and like Hooker a century and a half later, as to be proof of the existence of a distinctive theological dialect in the English language. Fortescue used the language to set forth the grounds of law and civil government so as to give proof of much legal knowledge, a clear head, and a sound mind.

Two other works are deserving of mention in their relation to the growth of the language. One of these is the "Morte Arthur," a translation from various French sources of the romance of Arthur, by Sir Thomas Malory. Taken all in all, his prose is the best English of the century. He shows great mastery of expression, a good deal of animation, and, in many passages, an easy flowing style, sometimes rising to beauty and elegance. His language is conformed to the Saxon idiom, and in its vocabulary is more purely Saxon than most writers of the time, and he seems to have understood better than most the power and beauty of choice words.

The other work to which we have referred is a collection of letters, almost the first, if not really the first specimen of the kind in modern literature.<sup>2</sup> They were

<sup>1</sup> ii. p. 362. See also ii. 369.

<sup>2</sup> Hippisley's *Early English Literature*, p. 237.



“But in Sir Thomas More’s ‘History of Edward the Fifth,’ written about 1509, and in the beautiful ballad of the ‘Nut-brown Maid,’ which we cannot place very far from the year 1500, there is not only a diminution of obsolete phraseology, but a certain modern turn and structure, both in the verse and prose, which denotes the commencement of a new era, and the establishment of new rules of taste in polite literature. Every one will understand that a broad line cannot be traced for the beginning of this change.”

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Causes contributing to the New Era — The Period of the Reformation analogous to the Age of Edward III. — Lord Berners' Froissart — The Life of Edward V. and of Richard III., by Sir Thomas More — Tyndale's Version of the New Testament — Based on that of Wycliffe — The Reformers, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley — Their Language — Sir John Cheke and Roger Ascham — Language of most Theological Writers — Foreign Importation overdone — Reaction — *Vindex Anglicus* — Real Value of the Additions from Foreign Sources — Words of Latin Derivation direct from the Classics — Formation of Words from Latin Sources — Scientific and Technical Terms — Farther Reaction — Union of the Latin and Saxon Elements — Study of Words.

THE new era, to which Hallam refers in the passage cited at the close of the last chapter, was due to a variety of causes, the most important of which we have already noticed, — the art of printing. In consequence of this should be named the revival of classical studies and an improved taste in literature. Other causes were the new spirit of enterprise, leading to voyages of discovery, to improvements in the mechanic arts, and more than all others, and in part as the result of the awakened mind, the reformation. All these causes led to thought and inquiry, and to the more vigorous and the more uniform use of language. The effect was not to polish and refine, save in a few select minds who were

not overborne by these influences, but were able to master them, as More and Ascham, and the great dramatists near the close of this century: it was rather to add to its massive strength, to enlarge its vocabulary, to develop its rude capabilities in every department of thought and effort. The period of the reformation was in many respects analogous to the age of Edward III. Both were seasons of the greatest intellectual activity, of the most thorough and exhaustive discussions on questions of law and polity, civil and religious, according to the means possessed. In both was there the development of a most intense nationality, of great significance to the growth of a national literature. All these various influences were faithfully represented in the language. It was still in the hearty vigor of youth, ready as at no other time for the impressions that were now to be made on it, and to constitute it one of the most effective and complete languages of modern times.

The most important work in its influence upon the language of the early part of the sixteenth century was the translation of "Froissart" by Lord Berners, published in 1523 and 1524. Its English is as racy and idiomatic as the French original, and the popularity of the work in its time made it of great value to our English speech. The translation is so well executed that Marsh has said that with the exception of now and then a phrase it would be difficult to find a single passage that gives evidence of having been first composed in another tongue.<sup>1</sup>

The next work that shows true progress in the development of the language is the life of Edward V. and a portion of that of Richard III., by Sir Thomas

<sup>1</sup> Second Series, p. 498.

More, first published in 1543. More was thoroughly educated, and at home in the classics ; and he brought his fine taste to the culture of his native tongue. He was interested to do this that he might use it with the more effect in religious controversy, and certainly he acquired no mean ability in this direction. In these works his style is free from the bitterness that marks his other writings, and has been justly esteemed a specimen of good prose, the best the language had as yet produced, and of value to show what it was then capable of in the hands of a master.

On the other hand, More's great rival in theological dispute, Tyndale, by his English version of the New Testament, first published in 1526, is said to have exerted greater influence upon English philology than any other native author between the ages of Chaucer and Shakspeare. It was needed at the time, and at once went into general circulation. It was a farther and more careful application of the religious dialect developed by Wycliffe, and became the basis of the later revised edition in current use at the present day. Its differences from Wycliffe are such as would naturally arise from the better knowledge and taste of the later period, not a difference in substance or essential character, but retaining the excellencies of the earlier version with such improvements as his better opportunities enabled him to make.

For many interesting particulars in regard to these early versions of the Scriptures, the reader is referred to Marsh's Lectures, First Series, twenty-eighth lecture.

Some of the reformers are worthy of notice for their valuable services to the English language. Cranmer ranks as the greatest writer among them, for the full and

even flow of his words and thoughts. Latimer and Ridley were celebrated for their oratory. Their language was not that of the schools, but of the people. Latimer had great popular tact, and knew how by popular illustrations from scenes and experiences of common life to interest his hearers and enforce the truth. This fact makes his discourses valuable memorials of the popular diction of the time, and were of great value to the language, from thus making it the means of expressing in a free and easy style thoughts that had hitherto been reserved to a more learned diction. His more impassioned utterances, which were of course more in keeping with the inward spirit of the language, are remarkably like the phraseology that would be employed at the present day.

A few distinguished scholars, as Sir John Cheke and Roger Ascham, wrote good English, though showing plainly the influence of their classical studies. In the former especially is found what Marsh calls the legitimate and proper influence of classical learning, — “not the crowding of our diction with Latin words and idioms, not an affluence of quotation or of reminiscence of ancient history and fable, but grammatical accuracy in syntax and inflection, strict attention to the proper use of words singly considered, and idiomatic purity in the construction of phrases and the arrangement of periods.” Cheke, with all his learning, would use in his English only such words as had been fully established by long usage. Ascham was less strict, yet a true lover of good speech.

But the larger part of the theologians and scholars were burdened by the material thrown on them in consequence of the great influx of Latin words from the

numerous translations of the classics, in which a great number of such words were introduced, from the deficiency of the existing English, and quite naturally from the love of classical literature, and a preference for words which had become familiar and almost one with the ideas they wished to express in English. Some of the reformers were foreigners, who generally wrote in Latin, and when they attempted to write in English, which could never be as much at their command, they of course retained as many Latin words as possible. During this century, and till the middle of the next, this influx of Latin words and idioms continued, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of a few men like Ascham and Wilson, — the latter one of the earliest teachers of rhetoric, — and others less known to fame. The work of foreign importation was decidedly overdone, and many good Saxon terms were crowded out, and many more words of Latin origin were introduced than were destined to retain a place in the language. Some of the sermons of the time seem to have had a popularity much in proportion to the amount of quotation from Greek and Latin authors, whether Christian or Pagan, and the words or phrases derived from foreign sources, which the common people could not have understood. Of forty-nine words cited by a curious writer in a paper called “*Vindex Anglicus*,” first printed in 1644, in illustration of the abuse to which this foreign importation was carried, only two words, *contrast* and *mephitick*, have retained their place.<sup>1</sup> One need

<sup>1</sup> The entire list is as follows: *adpugne*, *algale*, *adstupiate*, *doffe*, *defust*, *depex*, *brochity*, *bulbitate*, *extorque*, *ebriolate*, *caprious*, *contrast*, *cotillate*, *fraxate*, *froyce*, *imporcate*, *incenabe*, *incasse*, *gingreate*, *glabietall*, *halitate*, *ligurition*, *lurcate*, *kemand*, *mephitick*, *mirminodi-*

read but a few pages at the most in a larger part of the writings given to the world by the learned men from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, to meet words from Latin roots which never obtained any permanent footing in the language.

Yet much of the copiousness of our language is due to the words then brought in from classic sources, and there was much good sense in the remarks of the writer just cited for all his dislike of the "thousand unnatural phrases" that caused a loathing in his "curious and judicious eye." "I seek not to discredit their worthy and immortal labors, who with unmatched industry have fetched hither the best inhabitants of other climates and made them denizens in our colonies: these who with a skilful felicity have bought, brought, or borrowed the richest ornaments of other languages, to make ours abound with plenty and variety; but those I disclaim who, when the work is excellently performed already, must still be fingering; and when the quintessence and life of other tongues are ours already, must now traffic for the dregs, to the end they may be said to have done somewhat." "Our language is copious enough already, we need to traffic no more to enrich it; at least not so oft, for yet I will not deny but some pearl or other may be left behind uncheaped of other factors, which is worth the buying, yet would I have it naturalized here with judgment and authority."<sup>1</sup>

zed, obsalutate, orbaton, nixious, naustible, plumative, prodigity, puellation, raption, rereest, sumatize, sudate, solestick, scracone, subgrund, tridiculate, tristful, wadshaw, xantical, yexate, vilulate, undosous, vambrash, zoografe.

"I am deceived if they will not move both your anger and laughter."

<sup>1</sup> *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. v. pp. 432, 433.

Up to about the beginning of the sixteenth century, most of the words of Latin derivation that came into the language came in through the French, much reduced from their original form ; and when, as in some instances, by scholars or religious teachers, imported directly from the Latin, they were constructed on the model of those introduced through the French. In later times, as the words from the French or the Latin thus changed have been recognized, there has been a constant tendency, so far as may be consistent with established English forms, to restore the original Latin orthography, so as to keep trace of the original roots.

After the beginning of the sixteenth century, words were taken directly from the Latin, and this practice has continued in some measure to the present time ; while words from the French have been introduced from French literature, the same as from any other when needed. The most frequent occasion has been to express some shade of thought first developed in that language.

A large part of the words of the following terminations were introduced during the fifteenth, the sixteenth, and the first half of the seventeenth centuries : substantives ending in *tion* and *sion* ; those in *ity*, in *ance*, *ence*, *ancy*, *ency* ; adjectives in *ant* and *ent* ; nouns in *tor*, *tory*, and *ure* ; adjectives in *ary*, *ory*, *ic*, *ical*, *ive*, *ile*, and *ible*, *able* ; verbs in *ate*, *act*, *ect*, *ict*, and *fy*.

“Latin, either in its original state, or as transformed into French, is the only foreign element with which the Gothic basis of our language has combined to any great extent. In modern times, it is true, a vast number of scientific and technical terms have been fabricated from the Greek ; and this is the only manufacture of additions to our vocabulary upon a considerable scale,



that still goes on. But such words do not belong to the flesh and blood of the language at all; they may be styled its non-natural part, or an artificial appendage to it; they stand in the same relation to its proper substance in which the tools that a man works with stand to his living person.”<sup>1</sup>

The excessive importation of Latin words was soon followed by the reaction of the native good sense of the English mind. Reasons of a religious and political character had their influence. The overthrow of the Commonwealth, and the restoration of the royal family, brought in an entire new set of influences, antagonistic at once to the religious and political ideas that had prevailed as the result of the learned discussions of the preceding century, and to the language in which they were expressed. A century later the influence of Gibbon and Johnson tended to revive the use of a more distinctively Latin diction, yet never to the extent to which it prevailed during the reigns of James and the first Charles. This in turn gave way to a purer Saxon idiom, — the result of proper English studies. For the last fifty years, both elements in the language have come to be at the command of our authors, so as to suit the character of the themes discussed; and neither is again likely to be so far in the ascendant as to characterize a period, or a class of authors. Both elements are thoroughly incorporated into our English speech, and are necessary to the full and free expression of English thought; and the best writer or speaker is he who knows how to use both in their vital union with the greatest effect.

Some qualities of style depend on one of these elements, and some rather upon the other; the same is

<sup>1</sup> See Craik's *Outlines*, pp. 109, 110.

true of different subjects. Vivacity, energy, and force of expression require rather the Saxon elements; while elegance and the more studied ornaments call into play the Latin. Still, in the hands of a master like Jeremy Taylor, or Washington Irving, it is not easy to run such distinctions with much accuracy. Some of the most rhetorical passages in the eloquent discourses of Jeremy Taylor, abound in Saxon words. The distinction in regard to themes is more easily drawn. The Saxon elements are needed for the emotions, and the Latin for the intellect.


It is obvious, therefore, that a correct understanding of the language, so as to use it with the greatest effect, is only possible as the result of a careful study of both. Dean Trench<sup>1</sup> and Max Müller have done a most valuable service to our literature in calling attention to etymological study. Certain it is that the writer or speaker who uses words merely as labels to his thoughts, can never use them with power. Another writer will seem to charge his words to the full with content, to give them solidity and weight. Every word stands for an idea, and when duly marshalled and disciplined, their movement is like that of armed battalions. This study is of far more account as applied to the Latin portion of the language than to the Saxon. The Saxon is more native, retains still something of its virgin freshness and power. Its metaphorical and figurative language has not lost its imaginative character; it still appeals to the heart and affections, and comparatively little effort is required to revive it when impaired. Most of our words of Latin derivation were brought in for the intellect, not for the heart, — to convey some one phase or side of a

<sup>1</sup> See *Study of Words*, and other works.

truth, and thus fail of the suggestiveness and richness of Saxon words. The author who uses them habitually, without any deeper reference, ere long becomes enfeebled, his emotional nature dried up in its fountain-heads.

But more than the loss of intellectual power, there is a loss on the moral side also. Many words are store-houses of moral ideas, if we have but the key to unlock them, — and are capable of elevating our habits of thought and observation to higher levels. The word *constitution*, for instance, is not a parchment, or a paper ordinance simply; in its original sense, it carries our thoughts back to that which is abiding and necessary to the very conception of a state. The English word *wrong*, derived from the verb *wring*, reveals its nature as something *wrung* from a man contrary to his interests and rights; and when pronounced with a full sense of its import, and a full hearty articulation of its consonants, attains its full force. It is worthy of note that the French *tort* from the Latin *torqueo*, has a similar sense, and a similar moral lesson. So again the word *false*, from the Latin *fallo*, reveals the deception that has been practised on the honest mind, — the betrayal and abuse of man's moral nature.

Words are of no value, save as expressive of thought. Other things being equal, the man who uses the fewest words for his ideas will be sure of a hearing in the end. A score of authors may write on the same theme, but he only will obtain an abiding place in literature who has most fully and perfectly expressed his thoughts. The importance, therefore, of the study of words on the part of the author, or indeed, of any man who hopes to influence by his language the conduct or character of his fellow-men, or to secure himself an honorable place in their remembrance, can hardly be over-estimated.



## CHAPTER XII.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY CONCLUDED. — ITALIAN LITERATURE. — THE DRAMA. — SPENSER. — THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Italian Literature in the Age of Edward III., of Henry VIII. — Nature of its Influence — Blank Verse — Pastoral Poetry — Minor Poets of the Elizabethan Era — Dramatic Literature — Aid to the Saxon portion of the Language — Dramatic Writers — Scholars — Vocabulary of Shakspeare as Compared with Milton — The Vocabulary of Original Authors — Shakspeare in this respect — Shakspeare's Words the fit words — Early Dramatists — Spenser — Peculiarity of his Poetry, Language — Minor Poets of the Age: Warner, Joseph Hall, Chapman, Daniel, Donne, Quarles, Herbert — Standard Version of the Scriptures — Its Dialect — Influence — English Liturgy — Writers of the English Church — Style — Wants of the Language — Milton's Influence on the Language — Lord Bacon — Milton's Minor Poems and Prose.

*Influence of Italian Literature.*

THE influence of Italian literature, which had furnished subject-matter for some of the elder poets, as Chaucer and Gower, was again felt upon some of the more select minds in the reign of Henry VIII., as Wyatt and Surrey. Its influence, however, was confined rather to supplying models of composition, and improving the literary taste of our authors, than to the introduction of new idioms or new words into our vocabulary, and such

continued to be its influence for more than two centuries. In imitation of the Italian poets, Surrey first discarded rhyme, and employed blank verse, in the translation of two books of the *Æneid*. The attempt was not very successful, but led the way to later successes on the part of Milton and others. Surrey was more successful in his rhymed poems, and but for his untimely death, — the victim of tyranny, at the age of twenty-seven, — would have acquired a great name in English literature. Both Surrey and Wyatt did much to refine and polish the language, and by their choice of the popular colloquial speech of their time, disseminated their influence over a wide circle of readers.

It was from Italian literature that our poets borrowed the forms of pastoral poetry, so popular in the time of Elizabeth, and for some time later; illustrated by such writers as Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Browne, the Fletchers, and others. The ideal world which the pastoral poet created for himself gave a free range to his invention, and was a means of developing new powers in the language. It was a happy artifice by which the poet set himself free from the unpoetic realities around him, and with just enough of actual truth to retain him within the bounds of poetic probability, had the freest opportunity to display his fancy and his imagination. If this was not a field for the highest order of excellence, it was a valuable discipline for other and nobler labors on the part of such men as Spenser and Milton.

The minor poets of the Elizabethan period show the influence of Italian models quite as much in the substance as in the form of their poems. There is a warmth of coloring, a freedom in the expression of sensual pas-

sion, that belong rather to the warm blood of the South, than to the soberer English, and to the purities of home and the domestic affections. In this direction the language may have gained in copiousness and facility, but at the expense of moral sentiment, and so lost in true power. There were, however, at work in other directions influences that more than made up for any deficiency on this side ; influences that have had great weight on the course of English poetry ; and as the result, we have the high conceptions of the moral duties and influence of the poet that have been set forth by Milton and Wordsworth.

### *Dramatic Literature.*

The most important means of discipline which the language enjoyed in the sixteenth century was, doubtless, through the drama. If the learning and theology and political discussions of the time were of eminent service in developing the Latin elements of the language and adding to its copiousness, like noble service was rendered on the other hand to the Saxon portion by the drama. This was eminently for the people, and in the language of the people. Those who wrote were often learned men,—the earlier writers nearly all such ; and they were thus prepared to select with taste and judgment the fittest words from the popular dialect for the expression of their thoughts. The progress of the drama,—from the first rude exhibitions of scriptural scenes, the so-called Mysteries, and the Moral Plays which were devised for the instruction of the people with a mixture of comic and farcical elements in order to retain their attention and amuse,—step by step, as the true office

of the drama became more and more revealed and the means provided to realize it, till it was taken up by Shakspeare and his contemporary dramatists, was eminently favorable to the growth of choice and forcible language. The great variety of the characters and scenes gave it a wide range, till the vocabulary of Shakspeare became more than double that of any other writer in the English language. Craik estimates it at 21,000 words, without counting the inflectional forms as distinct words, while that of Milton was but 7000.

Every original author naturally forms a vocabulary in many respects his own, — for the utterance of his own thought and feeling on all subjects, however various. “But Shakspeare has invented twenty styles. He has a style for every one of his great characters, by which that character is distinguished from every other, as much as Pope is distinguished in his style from Dryden, or Milton from Spenser. And yet all the while it is he himself with his own peculiar accent that we hear in every one of them. The style or manner of expression — that is to say, the manner of thinking, of which the expression is always the product — is at once both that which belongs to the particular character and that which is equally natural to the poet, the conceiver and creator of the character.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet the great number of words which he employs are never used carelessly: they are always the fit words, and can rarely be changed for others as expressive in their place. Very many of them are used but once or twice, and then because needed for the character and the situation. The great mass of his ordinary diction is emphatically Saxon, and used, too, with economy. If we were

<sup>1</sup> Craik, i. 564.

to strike out all the words used not more than twenty times, there would be a very great reduction of his vocabulary, perhaps to the amount of two thirds of the whole. His power lay not simply in the extent of his vocabulary, needful as this was to his purpose, but in the skilful combination and power of the words he employed.

Shakspeare was preceded by dramatists and other writers who had been steadily developing the resources of the language in all directions. His age was one of the greatest intellectual activity, — of fresh, original activity, on the most important subjects of human thought or endeavor. The public mind was stirred to its lowest depths by profound moral and political truth. And it was the moral life of man in its complete circle, — in its completed round of award, as the result of necessary moral laws under the guidance of Divine Providence, that Shakspeare aimed to set forth. It was an ideal conception, the consummation of the drama; one adequate to call forth his utmost energies, and demanding for its full realization the largest experience, or what is the same to the true genius, the truest conception of all possible human relations, and a language competent to express them, — and all this Shakspeare had. And it is not too much to say, that English speech as well as literature owes more to him than to any other man. Other dramatists of his time, as Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, all have their excellences, — passages of great power, but not the even uniform excellence, and by no means the command of language possessed by Shakspeare. Not unwisely has the student been referred to Shakspeare next to the authorized version of the Scriptures for his best studies in the use of his native tongue.



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Shakspeare's influence on his native tongue was universal like his character, as valuable to its powers in prose as in verse. His prose was as good as the English literature had yet known. Spenser's influence, on the other hand, was limited rather to poetry. He developed the language of sensuous imagery to its fullest compass. His style is rich, gorgeous, all aglow with poetic splendors. He seems to fairly revel in the profusion of beautiful imagery that crowds upon his fancy and imagination. The accumulations of the past from Chaucer down, with all the manifold creations of his own genius, are alike at his command. He sometimes indulges in archaic expressions, but they are the material he has borrowed from older poets; he is not archaic in his thought or spirit, but fully up to the time in which he lived. "In the mastery of the true English of his time," says Marsh,<sup>1</sup> "in acute sensibility of ear and exquisite skill in the musical arrangement of words, he has no superior in the whole compass of English literature." The same writer has called attention to his rare felicity in verbal combinations, his use of adjectives to heighten and intensify the appropriate meaning of his nouns, and often with reference to their radical sense, thus evincing a study of words rare at that period.

The minor poets of the time were so far eclipsed by Spenser and Shakspeare as to fail of their just deserts. Their service to the language was much in the same general direction as that of the great masters. They wrote because they had something to say, and often said it well. Craik says of one of them, — Warner, who died in 1609, — that for "fluency, combined with precision, and economy of diction," he is probably unrivalled among the

<sup>1</sup> Second Series, p. 548.

writers of English verse. The satires of Joseph Hall are still read with interest for their animated style and sentiment. Chapman's translation of Homer is the best extant, — in tone and spirit more like an original work than a translation. Daniel, so much admired by Coleridge, and yet more, Donne, illustrated the power of our speech to treat philosophical and metaphysical subjects in verse. The successors of Donne, — Quarles and Herbert, — taxed it for whatever is quaint and sententious; and, by their popularity, especially the latter, gave currency to what for want of a better term may be called poetical conceits rather than good verse.

In order to present together what stands in logical connection, some portion of what belongs to the next century will be noticed here.

Our standard version of the Scriptures, though due in great measure to earlier versions and based on that of Wycliffe, yet owes much to the care of the scholars appointed by King James. This subject has been discussed so fully and admirably by Marsh in his first series of lectures, that only a recognition of its place as affecting the character of the language will here be made. It presents not the dialect of any one portion of the English people, but the carefully studied words of all English dialects, chosen during a long series of years, by a succession of earnest, thoughtful scholars, and at last adopted as the best in the judgment of a large number of able and accomplished divines. Its general use since, wherever English is spoken, has made it a power, conservative of the best and purest elements of our native speech. Next to this should be reckoned the liturgy of the English church used so widely in the British realms, as also for substance in this country. Although nominally

adopted in the reign of Edward VI., it had become fully established by the opening of the seventeenth century. Its diction is strongly marked by its Anglo-Saxon character, and has had no little influence upon the style and methods of composition of the English clergy. During the century under review, their style in sermons and theological writing was manifestly superior to that of the dissenters; more free, and easy, and idiomatic. Some of the finest of the Puritan writers lost much of their power from their heavy, cumbrous speech. There are some notable exceptions. But none of them can be compared with Jeremy Taylor, or Barrow. And at the close of the preceding century, Hooker had given an example of philosophical precision in the use of language, and some passages of great rhetorical beauty. The nearest rivals of these great masters of prose which the century produced on the other side were Milton and Bunyan; the first sometimes indulging in Latinisms to excess, but also remarkable for his rhythmical flow, and full, well-rounded periods; the other for his admirable simplicity and naturalness of style.

Nothing was now lacking in order to the full compass of the language but its use in the composition of a great epic, and in the higher triumphs of oratory. The last was not to be exhibited till the next century by Lord Chatham, Burke, and their compeers in both hemispheres; the first was in reserve for Milton. He illustrated the capacity of the language to embrace the highest themes of poetry, and established our heroic measure. Poetry like his belongs emphatically to what De Quincey calls the literature of power; — it affects the thought of men, elevates, ennobles, and inspires fitting language for its utterance.

In the same light is Lord Bacon's influence to be regarded. His works, so far as they were in English, had an influence rather upon the thought of his time than directly upon its expression. His essays are to be regarded, as Marsh observes, as a "fair picture of the language used at that time by men of the highest culture in the conversational discussion of questions of practical philosophy, or what the Germans call *world-wisdom*." Yet in the impulse he gave to scientific inquiry and to philosophic thought, he was not, by any means, without great influence upon the language.

Milton's great poetical works fell upon an evil time. Like Bacon's, his works were rather for succeeding ages than for his own. His thought was of a character that found little appreciation among the returned cavaliers, or the crowds that waited on the exhibitions of the comic dramatists. His minor poems which were most thoroughly finished specimens of verse, filled to the full with rich poetic thought and imagery, shared in the fate that political and moral prejudices excited. They, too, were to find fit audience in another more favorable period. His prose was for his own age, his poetry for later times. It was in the latter that he was most at home, best able to give his thoughts a fitting form.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CONCLUDING PERIOD.

The French School — Period in England — Dryden — His Position and Merits — Hobbes, his Style — The Merits of the French School — The Prose of the Essayists, as a Model — Bunyan — Izaak Walton — Changes in the Language since the opening of the Eighteenth Century — Defoe — Swift — Bolingbroke — Johnson — Value of Johnson's Labors — His Written Style — The English Historians — The Style of Macaulay — Causes of a more Idiomatic Style of Late Years — Influence of German Literature — The Language in Great Britain as Compared with its Use in the United States — Differences — Cause — Orthography — Changes of Pronunciation — Influence of Political Discussions, of the Clergy — Position and Future Destiny of the Language.

*The French School.*

IMPORTANT changes in the literary world are never sudden. It is convenient to mark them by periods, but the first beginnings usually lie back underneath former periods, and stretch over succeeding ones. The influence of French literature upon the English mind was already marked in the time of Charles I. The intercourse brought about between the two kingdoms through Queen Henrietta led to a partial imitation of French models. The distinguishing characteristic of French poetry as of French art, as Craik justly remarks, "neatness in the dressing of the thought," found English imi-


tators in Waller, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling, — all minor poets, such as would most naturally become imitators. They were the first to exemplify, as a set purpose of style, what may be done by correctness of expression and smoothness of flow. They all deserve better of the language than of its poetry, for their attempt to give it greater finish and polish. The spirit of the age was yet too serious to allow of the sacrifice of all thought to mere effect, to brilliancy and display; though this was manifestly the tendency of this kind of writing, — to be studious of point rather than of truth, to rely on artifice and skill rather than on nature and true poetic feeling. Most of these writers, as would be expected, belonged to the Cavalier party, but one on the Puritan side deserves mention, George Wither, who was known as a writer for some sixty years. His great excellence is his genuine English, and his anticipation, so to speak, of the forms and expressions of modern composition. “His unaffected diction even now, has scarcely a stain of age upon it.” Some of his songs and hymns of the Church are greatly admired. The secret of this modern cast of his composition it is not difficult to explain. He was eminently true to the English spirit, — to the moral ideas which characterize English literature as a whole, from which it occasionally diverges, for a time, to one side or the other, but sooner or later comes back. He had imbibed the religious spirit of his time, and improved the means of culture offered him, so as to give a fitting form to the poetic religious thought of the day, and though not a genius of the highest order, was eminently happy in his age and opportunities.

What is called the French school of poetry is hardly



to be attributed solely to French influence, though undoubtedly promoted by it, but rather to the same cause in both languages, the study of Rôman classic poetry, or perhaps to the study of the classics generally. It was rather the attempt to imitate so far as the unlike languages would allow, classic models, to emulate the same finish and polish of diction. In the French language, from its derivation, the attempt was much more successful than in English. It was really foreign to the genius of the English, both in respect of form and of thought. It was opposed to the true Christian spirit and the deeper thought on all subjects which it inspires. It suited better the people whose language and religion were more in the spirit of the classical period. In England this school flourished during the decline of the religious sentiment for a century or more, and then gave way to the revival of a purer, more English, as more Christian, feeling and thought.

Of this French school Dryden is sometimes called the founder, but as we have seen, it originated in an earlier period. Though belonging to this school, rather than to that of Shakspeare and Milton, he was too great a poet, and too much of a man to be the disciple of a school. He exhibits a true native, hearty vigor of expression, a command of good English diction, that redeems him at once from all servility to models. He deserves a high place for his valuable services to the language, by his own methods of using it in both prose and verse, and for his valuable criticism. He may be said to mark the turning point between the old heavy, cumbrous diction, the prolux discussions due, as we have suggested, in part to the influence of the scholastic philosophy, which characterize so much of the prose liter-



ature of the preceding century and stand now so much in the way of the influence of some of the noblest productions of the English minds, and the modern simplicity and directness of expression. There had been some specimens of good English prose before him, but they were exceptional instances. Jeremy Taylor, with all his eloquence and mastery of the long sentence, is far enough from the vivacity, directness, and energy of modern thought; Milton's prose, rich and copious as it is, is yet too much loaded with Latinisms to be a model of good English. The best writer, the man who has been styled by Hallam, "our first uniformly careful and correct writer, was Hobbes." In the properly intellectual qualities of style he has no superior. Ornament was not in his vein. In his translation of Homer it is said that there are but two positively poetical lines in the entire work. Little of poetical coloring could then be expected in his prose. "This," as Craik observes, "is his least merit. No writer has succeeded in making language a more perfect exponent of thought that it is, as employed by Hobbes. His style is not poetical nor glowing nor eloquent, because his mind was not poetical, and the subjects about which he wrote would have rejected the exaggerations of imaginative or passionate expression, if he had been capable of supplying such. But in the prime qualities of precision and perspicuity, and also in economy and succinctness, in force and in terseness, it is the very perfection of an expository style."<sup>1</sup> In these qualities, so unlike those of former English writers, we recognize the peculiarities characteristic of modern French prose, suggested probably at the first by French models, but carried to their perfection by a mind that needed but

<sup>1</sup> Craik's *History of English Literature*, vol. ii. p. 109.

a suggestion in order to the successful prosecution of his work.

What had been the exception before, found in detached passages of particular writers, and in individual writers, with Dryden became the rule, and with him may be said to have begun our modern prose.

The influence of the French school — or rather classical school of poetry — was on the whole of great value to the culture of the language, if we can detach the language from the thought embodied in it. The study of words for the sake of their poetical capabilities has ever been of value as a means of securing a choice diction. This was carried to an excess by Pope and his followers, and to the serious damage of true poetic feeling, yet its influence upon the language is obvious in the prose style of Pope, Gray, and Cowper, as well as in the essayists of the eighteenth century, more particularly Addison and Steele. The style of these authors is often commended as a model for young authors, and if ease and simplicity of expression are all that is to be desired, the commendation is good; but if the higher qualities of style, as force, energy, intensity, and vehemence, — qualities depending quite as much on the thought as on the expression, though uniting both, — are to be acquired, then these authors should be read but sparingly. There are others far better suited to develop in the student a hearty, vigorous, masculine style. They are such as breathe more of the true English spirit, its practical sound sense, its vehement energy, as fired by Christian ideas, and Christian conceptions of life and duty.

During the existence of this French school there were a few writers who adhered with true Saxon fidelity to the native idiom. One of the most remarkable of these

was John Bunyan. His language was not impaired by the learning of the schools, by its Latinity, or its scholasticism, nor by the courtly dialect of the cavaliers, nor by the models of the French school. "The style of Bunyan," says Lord Macaulay, "is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtile disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain working men, was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed."<sup>1</sup>

Next to Bunyan, should be ranked the good and honest angler, — Izaak Walton; a man in whom the hearty love of truth had its full expression, to the utter neglect of all pretence and affectation of style or thought.

*The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.*

The changes made in the language since the opening of the eighteenth century have been such as have re-

<sup>1</sup> *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 266. (Edition published by Sheldon & Co., New York.)

sulted from its use by good authors, rather than from the admixture or assimilation of new elements. It has shared in the general advance in science and culture of those who have used it in both hemispheres. As the expression of character, it has varied as the national and moral character of the people has changed.

In Great Britain the change has been less perhaps than in the United States and the British Colonies. A few authors only need be mentioned as having a special influence. Among these are Defoe, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Johnson, and perhaps the great English historians.

Defoe exhibited the power of the language in a series of works belonging to what may be termed the delineative imagination. Minuteness of detail, truth to nature, graphic description, giving to all an air of reality, and a purity of English idiom, were his special characteristics. In his chosen field he ranked with Hobbes in that of political and moral philosophy. Both were eminently masters of English. In Defoe's works there is nothing of his own individuality,—of his personal character. In this respect Swift is wholly unlike him. Anything that comes from his pen bears the stamp of the author, his intense feeling, passions, and prejudices. No man ever excelled him in the language of biting sarcasm, and few for the nervous energy, and the masculine force of his English. His keen glance pierced straight to the heart of things, and his language is fully adequate to his perception,—sometimes coarse, almost savage in its severity, and again flexible to the gentler emotions; yet on the whole remarkable for its clear masculine force. There is nothing of the tameness and weak goodness to be found in some authors of his age; he had no patience

with littleness or meanness of any sort, but struck right and left, with a stern English practical sense, eminently refreshing to one weary of the nice proprieties and the classical euphemisms of second and third rate authors.

Another writer, by his moral and political affinities left the more free to express his own individuality, and thus to merit a notice in this connection, was Lord Bolingbroke. "His style," observes Craik,<sup>1</sup> "was a happy medium between that of the scholar and that of the man of society ; or rather it was a happy combination of the best qualities of both, heightening the ease, freedom, fluency, and liveliness of elegant conversation with many of the deeper and richer tones of the eloquence of formal orations and of books. The example he thus set has probably had a very considerable effect in moulding the style of popular writing among us since his time." The following passage reminds us of the style of Lord Macaulay. It is from a notice of the two brothers Charles and James, of the House of Stuart : —

"The two brothers, Charles and James, became then infected with popery to such degrees as their different characters admitted of. Charles had parts ; and his good understanding served as an antidote to repel the poison. James, the simplest man of his time, drank off the whole chalice. The poison met, in his composition, with all the fear, all the credulity, and all the obstinacy of temper proper to increase its virulence, and to strengthen its effect. The first had always a wrong bias upon him. . . . The last drunk with superstitious and even enthusiastic zeal, ran headlong upon his own ruin whilst he endeavored to precipitate ours. His parliament and his people did all they could do to save themselves by win-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 248.

ning him. But all was vain : he had no principle on which they could take hold. Even his good qualities worked against them, and his love of his country went halves with his bigotry. How he succeeded we have heard from our fathers. The revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight saved the nation and ruined the king.”<sup>1</sup>

But to no man of the century was the language so much indebted as to the great lexicographer, Dr. Samuel Johnson. His dictionary, the result of seven years' incessant labor, with the aid of five or six copyists, was published in 1755, and marks an era in the history of the language. Several attempts had been made,<sup>2</sup> before this, with some degree of success. Of these the dictionary of Bailey, originally published in 1720, had gone through a large number of editions, and was in current use, yet the work of Johnson was at once hailed as the dictionary of English speech, and more than any other has continued to be the standard to the present time. No other work of the kind has done so much to fix the external form of the language, and to settle the meaning and use of words. Its etymology, however, is specially defective, considered in the light of present investigations. But while aiming to settle so far as possible the current orthography, Johnson was not insensible to the changes constantly taking place. “No dictionary of a living language ever can be perfect, since whilst it is hastening to publication some words are budding, and some are falling away.” This remark is well confirmed by our most judicious lexicographer, Dr. Worcester, when he says, “It is undoubtedly true that

<sup>1</sup> Concluding part of a letter to Sir William Wyndham.

<sup>2</sup> See *History of English Lexicography*, Preface to Worcester's Dictionary.

there never was so great an influx of new words into the English language during any century, from the time of its first formation to the time of the first publication of Johnson's Dictionary, as there has been since that event. Various other changes have taken place in the language. Some words then obsolete have been revived, some then in use have now become obsolete, and many have changed their orthography."<sup>1</sup>

Johnson's English style in written discourse was marked by a return to the greater use of words of Latin derivation, giving that peculiar sonorousness and pomp of diction that for want of a better word has been called Johnsonese, — and in this respect he cannot be said to have aided the purity of our English idiom, farther than the use of the language by any strong clear minded author tends to improve it. This peculiar style, however, arose from no real lack of a better and heartier idiom, as the record of his conversations abundantly proves.


No one of the three great English historians of the last century, nor even Lord Macaulay of the present, is to be commended as in all respects a proper model of English style, though all have had, and will continue to have by their works, a great influence. No one of the first three was of English education. The style of Hume, while remarkable for its clearness and simplicity, and general fitness for his theme, is not without its Scotticisms; Gibbon's, though admirable in its sustained majesty and brilliancy, and still more than Hume's even, adapted to the grandeur of his theme, — his full, well-rounded periods so like the steady tramp of the Roman legions, or the triumphal processions that followed the

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Worcester's Dictionary*, p. xxv.



conquerors to the capitol, — is far enough from the idiomatic force of Swift, the impassioned vehemence of Motley, or the pictorial beauty of Prescott; and Robertson lacks both adaptation of style to subject and idiomatic worth, though widely read in his time and since, because of his subject-matter and the lack of better authors. The style of Lord Macaulay is wanting in the calm, serious tone that carries conviction of truth. It is too much that of the advocate; too much set upon striking effects. It interests and captivates, but it has more of dazzling brilliancy than the clear serene light of truth. It is not promotive of thought, nor suited to lodge great truths in the mind. It must not be denied that it has also great merits; — great clearness and precision, beauty and aptness of illustration, marked by a rare command of all the resources of the language. But its popularity, great as it is, lacks the soberer qualities of style, which are necessary to secure it its present high regard in after times, and to make it a safe model for students.

The revival of a better spirit of poetry, the study of old English, and the better moral and religious sentiment that has prevailed the last three fourths of a century, have done much to secure better thought and better language, — have led to a more idiomatic Saxon style, not only among the prose writers, but still more among the poets, as Byron, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Mrs. Browning. On the other hand the influence of German literature has not been favorable to the purity of our idiom. Mr. Carlyle, who did most to introduce it to the public, developed a peculiar style for himself, which by reason of the oftentimes valuable thought and earnestness of the author, obtains some admirers, and so far exerts



an unwholesome influence. So occasionally individual instances may be expected of departures from the common standard, but the sober good sense of the English mind cannot long be turned away by false lights.

In Great Britain there still exists great diversity in the use of the language among the different classes of society. The long-settled habits and usages of English life do not seem to be easily flexible to the changes going on, or to common influences, as in this country. The common mind is moved more slowly,—diversities of idiom require time to be reduced to a common standard; new words, developed in trade or the arts, or by foreign intercourse, are more restricted in their use, become popularized less frequently, and only after the lapse of a longer time than in this country. The better classes speak better and the common people worse than in the United States, where the democratic spirit unfortunately tends to lower the standard from the best use, and the greater intercourse with all parts of the country, by migration and the common issues of the press, tends to preserve a common idiom. For these reasons, too, there is little doubt that the common people of this country use a much larger vocabulary than the same class in Great Britain. If we add to these the new words that have been derived from our foreign population, from the peculiarities of our national government and social institutions, and from the different circumstances and employments of our people generally, we shall find not only a larger vocabulary but in many respects a different one from that in common use in Great Britain. The various political, religious, and social relations find their proper expression in classes of words peculiar to the different countries. There are also retained in this

country, and falsely called Americanisms, many words of good old English stock, which have been handed down from the original colonists, but have fallen out of use in the mother country. There are again some words which have first obtained a special use in their respective localities, and have afterwards become naturalized.

For a valuable analysis of words used in different senses in the two countries the reader is referred to a paper on Provincialisms, Archaisms, and Americanisms, in "Worcester's Dictionary," and for a more full discussion of the subject, and for additional suggestions, to Marsh, — last lecture of his first series.

The orthography of the language can hardly yet be considered as settled in regard to all words, though comparatively little change has been made on the forms laid down by Johnson. Attempts have been made at different times, as by Dr. Webster, in the earlier editions of his Dictionary, but with little success. The language is not very submissive to the theories of grammarians or lexicographers; its life and spontaneity cannot long be held in abeyance or subjected to any predetermined forms, however plausible or well reasoned. The later efforts of phonographers meet no better success with the common mind, to say nothing of the opposition of all interested in philological studies.

Of late years the changes in pronunciation have been greater than in orthography. And here too the usage in this country is more at variance with that of Great Britain. This is due, doubtless, mainly to climate. The more northern climates naturally tend to a more hurried and less open pronunciation, and to throwing the accent upon the first part of the word, and to slurring over the latter part. In this country, and the more as one goes

west or south, there is noticed the tendency to throw the accent more toward the penult, and, as Marsh has noticed, many proper names of two syllables, having the accent on the first syllable in New England, take it on the last at the West and South.

In one direction at least American authors have enriched the language, — in that of political discussion. The state papers of the Revolution and the works of our great statesmen, Hamilton, Madison, Jefferson, the Adamses, and Webster, have taken up and carried forward to greater completeness the work begun by Milton and Sidney, and others, noted in the political discussions of the seventeenth century on British soil.

The language in both countries owes much to the example and influence of its educated clergymen, not more perhaps from their public addresses and the services of the Sabbath, than from their private personal intercourse among the people. They help to preserve its dignity and purity; they are the conservators of the better elements of the popular diction, while the racier and the more idiomatic are constantly renewed from the dialect of common life.

The written language of the two nationalities, as the inheritor of all the literature of the past, and the embodiment of the utmost variety of thought on all human interests, must remain substantially the same. The great truths which underlie all human progress, the conditions of the world's evangelization, and the triumph of a Christian civilization, have been committed to it. Its extension and the conservation of its powers are thus intimately connected with the progress of culture and of humanity.

## ILLUSTRATIVE SPECIMENS.

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### I. ORIGINAL ENGLISH; ENGLISH PURE OR SIMPLE, (SAXON OR ANGLO-SAXON.)

#### 1. *From the Voyage of Ohther in Alfred's Translation of Orosius, Book I.: — before A. D. 900.*

And thær is mid Estum dheaw, thonne thær biðh man dead, thæt he lidh inne unforbærned mid his magum and freondum monadh, ge hwilum twegen, and tha kyningas and tha odhre heahdhungene men swa micle lencg swa hi maran speda habbadh; hwilum healf gear thæt hi beodh unforbærned, and liegadh bufan eorthan on hyra husum. And, ealle tha hwile the thæt lic biðh inne, thær sceal beon gedrync and plega, odh thone dæg the hi hine forbærnadh.

[And there is with Esthonians a custom, when there is one dead, that he lieth within unburnt with his kinsmen and friends a month, yea sometimes (whiles, *Scot.*) twain, and the kings and the other high-spoken-of men so much (mickle, *Scot.*) longer as they more wealth (*lit.* speed) have; sometimes [it is] half a year that they be unburnt, and lie above earth in their houses. And, all the while that the corpse is within, there shall be (it is the custom that there be) drinking and play until the day that they it burn.]

(*Craik.*)

2. *From the latter portion of the Chronicle:—about 1100.*

A. D. 1087.— . . . Dhissum thus gedone, se cyng Willelm cearde ongean to Normandige. . . He swealt on Normandige on thone nextan dæg æfter nativitas Sce Marie; and man begyrgede hine on Cathum æt Sce [Sci?] Stephanes mynstre. . . Gif hwa gewilniged to gewitane hu gedon man he was, odhdhe hwilcne wurdhscipe he hæfde, odhdhe hu fela lande he wære hlaforð, thonne wille we be him awritan swa swa we hine ageaton; we him onlocodan, and odhre hwile on his hirede wunedon. . . He sætte mycel deorfridh, and he lægde laga thær widh; thæt swa hwa swa sloge heort odhdhe hinde thæt hine man sceold blendian. He forbead tha heortas,<sup>1</sup> swylce eac tha baras. Swa swidhe he lufode tha heodeor swylce he wære heora fæder. Eac he sætte be tham haran thæt hi mosten freo faran. His rice men hit mændon, and tha earme men hit beceorodan; ac he wæs swa stidh thæt he ne rohte heora eallra nidh.

[This thus done, the King William turned again to Normandy. . . . He died in Normandy on the next day after (the) nativity of St. Mary (*Nativitas Sanctæ Mariæ*); and man (German *man*, French *on*, anciently *homme*) buried him in Caen, at St. Stephen's minster. . . . If any may wish to know how to do man (what kind of man) he was, or what worship he had, or of how many lands he was lord, then will we by (in regard to) him write so as we him knew: we him beheld, and other while in his household wonned (dwelt). . . . He set much deer free-ground (he made many deer-parks), and he laid [down] laws therewith;

<sup>1</sup> We ought, apparently, to read, *That hwa swa sloge heort*, and *Swa he forbead tha heortas*. The passage from *He sætte mycel deorfridh* is probably in rhyme, although Dr. Ingram's proposed substitution of *blinde* for *blendian* is inadmissible without a verb in the infinitive after *sceold*.

that whoso slew hare or hind that him man should blind. As he forbade [to slay] the harts, so also the boars. So much he loved the high-deer as he were their father. Also he set by (appointed regarding) the hares that they must free fare. His rich men it moaned, and the poor men it lamented; but he was so stern, that he recked not the hatred of them all.]

The element printed *dh* in these two extracts is to be sounded as the *th* in *this*. It is represented in the MSS., and in the common so-called Saxon printing, by one character; as the *th* heard in *thin* is by another. But there is by no means a perfect correspondence, as to this matter, between the old language and our present English; nor, indeed, are the two characters distinguished with any uniformity of usage in the MSS.

(*Craik.*)

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3. *From the Anglo-Saxon Version of the Holy Gospels, edited by B. Thorpe, London, 1842. Time about 1100. John iv. 1-10.*

Tha se Hælend wyste thæt tha Pharisei gehyrdon thæt he hæfde mā leorning-cnyhta thonne Iohannes, (theah se Hælend ne fullode, ac hys leorning-cnyhtas,) tha forlet he Iudea-land, and for eft on Galilea. Hym gebyrede thæt he sceolde faran thurh Samaria-land. Witodlice he com on Samarian cestre, the ys genemmed Sychar, neah tham tune the Iacob sealde Iosepe his suna. Thær waes Iacobes wyll. Se Hælend sæt æt tham wyll, tha he wæs werig gegan: and hit wæs mid-dæg. Tha com thær an wif of Samaria, wolde wæter feccan: Tha cwædh se Hælend to hyre; syle me drincan. (Hys leorning-cnyhtas ferdon tha to thære ceastre, woldon him mete biggan.) Tha cwædh thæt Samaritanisce wif to hym; Humeta bitst thu æt me drincan, thonne thu

eart Iudeisc, and ic eom Samaritanisce wif? ne brucadh Iudeas and Samaritanisce metes ætgædere. Tha and-swarode se Hælend, and cwædh to hyre : Gif thu wistest Godes gyfe, and hwæt se is the cwydh to the, syle me drincan witodlice ; thu bæde hine thæt he sealde the lifes wæter.

In the above, the aspirate forms for *th* and *dh* are printed according to the rule laid down by Ettmüller, following the example of Grimm and Rask : —

“Gothicæ linguæ norma ac regula ab Anglosaxonibus eo perturbata est, ut pro simplici Gothorum aspirata þ duobus uterentur signis, scil. þ et ð (= th et dh), quorum alterum mediis in vocibus inque earum fine poneretur. Maximam partem etiam libri scripti hanc regulam tuentur, tamen non semper sibi constant, nam interdum voces a ð incipiunt, inque medio et fine þ exhibent.” — *Præfatio, Lex. Anglosax.*



## II. BROKEN ENGLISH, OR SEMI-ENGLISH (SEMI-SAXON):

A. D. 1150-1250.

4. *The Commencement of Layamon's Brut, according to the Oldest of the two Versions, MS. Cott. Calig. A, ix.: — about 1200.*<sup>1</sup>

An preost wes on leoden ;  
 Layamon wes ihoten ;  
 He wes Leovenadhes sone :  
 Lidhe him beo Drihtē.  
 He wonede at Ernleye,  
 At ædhelen are chirechen,  
 Uppen Sevarne stalhe :  
 Sel thar him thuhte ;  
 On fest Radestone ;  
 Ther he bock radde.  
 Hit com him on mode,  
 And on his mern thonke,  
 Thet he wolde of Engle  
 Tha ædhelæn tellen ;  
 Wat heo ihoten weoren,  
 And wonene heo comen,  
 Tha Englene londe  
 Ærest ahten  
 Æfter than flode,

<sup>1</sup> In this and other extracts (made by Craik) the ancient fashion of writing and printing *i* for *j*, *u* for *v*, and *v* for *u*, in particular circumstances, has not been adhered to, though preserved by some of the modern editors. It is merely a different mode of forming the letters in question, which cannot be supposed to have affected their sound.

The from Drihtene com,  
 The al her a-quelde  
 Quic that he funde,  
 Buten Noe and Sem,  
 Japhet and Cham,  
 And heore four wives,  
 The mid heom weren on archen.

[A priest was on earth (or, perhaps, in the land, or among the people); Layamon was [he] (called); he was Leovenath's son; gracious to him be [the] Lord. He wonned (dwelt) at Ernley, at a noble church, upon Severn's bank, — good there to him [it] seemed — near Radestone; there he book read. It came to him in mind, and in his chief (?) thought, that he would of Englishmen the noble-deeds tell; what they called were, and whence they came, that English land first owned, after the flood, that from [the] Lord came, that all here quelled (destroyed), quick (alive) that it found, but Noah and Shem, Japhet and Ham, and their four wives, that with them were in [the] ark.]

In the later version, MS. Cott. Otho, C. xiii., the passage stands thus:—

A prest was in londe;  
 Laweman was hote;  
 He was Leucais sone  
 Lef him beo drifte,  
 He wonede at Ernleie,  
 Wid than gode cnitthe;  
 Uppen Sevarne;  
 Merie ther him thohte;  
 Faste bi Radistone:  
 Ther heo bokes radde.  
 Hit com him on mode,  
 And on his thonke,  
 That he wolde of Engeland  
 The riftnesse telle;  
 Wat the men hi-hote weren,

And wancne hi comen,  
 The Englene lond  
 Ærest afden  
 After than flode,  
 That fram God com ;  
 That al ere acwelde  
 Cwic that hit funde,  
 Bot Noe and Sem,  
 Japhet and Cam,  
 And hire four wives,  
 That mid ham there weren.

In this version Sir F. Madden conjectures that *hote*, in line 2, should be *ihote*; that *heo*, in line 10, should be *he*; and that *wancne*, in line 16, should be *wanene*.

(*Craik.*)

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5. *Layamon's Description* (with the two hemistichs, or short lines, printed as a single verse) *of the arming of Prince Arthur before the Battle of Baddon Hill, or Bath* (A. D. 520 ?), *from the Brut*, 21,149–21,568; *Madden*, II. 464–5:—*also given, with one or two variations, by Guest, Eng. Rh.* II. 118, 119:—*from MS. Cott. Calig. A.* ix:—*about 1200.*

He heng an his sweore ænne sceld deore ;  
 His nome was on Bruttisc Pridwen ihaten :  
 Ther was innen igraven mid rede golde staven  
 An on-licnes deore of Drihtenes moder.  
 His spere he nom an honde, tha Ron wes ihaten.  
 Tha he hafden al his iweden tha leop he on his steden.  
 Tha he mihte behalden tha bihalves stoden  
 Thene vœireste cniht the verde scolde leden ;  
 Ne isæ nævere na man selere cniht nenne  
 Thenne him wes Ardhur, adhelest cunnes.

That is, literally : —

He hung on his neck a dear [precious] shield ;  
 Its name was in British called Pridwen :  
 There was within [on it] engraven with red gold tracings  
 A dear likeness of the Lord's mother.  
 His spear he took in hand, that was called Ron.  
 When he had all his weeds [accoutrements], then leapt he on his  
 steed.  
 Then they might behold that beside stood  
 The fairest knight that host should lead ;  
 Nor saw never no man better knight none  
 Than he was, Arthur, noblest of kin.

In the later version, MS. Cott. Otho, C. xiii. (1250?), this passage stands :—

He heng on his swere one sceald deore ;  
 His name was in Bruttisse Pridewyn ihote ;  
 That (thar ?) was hine igraved on anlichnesse of golde,  
 That was mid isothe Drihtene moder.  
 His spere he nam an honde, that Ron was ihote.  
 Tho he hadde al his wede, tho leop he on his stede.  
 Tho hii mihte bi-holde that thar bi-halves were  
 Thane fairest cniht that ferde sal leade.

(The two concluding lines do not occur in the later MS.)

The *y* which occurs in *Layamon*, *Ernleye*, and other words, is represented in the original by a character the form of which, as well as its position, would seem to indicate that it represented a sound combining that of *g* and *y*, or intermediate between the two. In the modern language it has for the most part become *y* before a vowel, and *g* hard, or *gh*, elsewhere. It never can have had any resemblance to the sound of *z*, by which it has sometimes been ignorantly rendered in modern reprints of old English and Scottish texts. In the later version of *Layamon* this character appears much less frequently than in the earlier version, and that representing *dh* does not occur at all.

(*Craik.*)

6. *The following passage of four lines from both texts will show the change in the form of the possessive as well as the unsettled usage of the time. — Madden's Layamon, 19565–69. Vol. ii. p. 397.*

*Earlier Text.*

Al thene dæi-lihte,  
Udheres cnihtes,  
Slogen and nomen  
Al that heo neh comen.

*Later Text.*

And al than day-liht  
Uter his cnihtes,  
Slogen and nomen,  
That hii neh comen.

[ [And] all the daylight Uther's (Uther his) knights slew and captured all that they came nigh.]

III. COMPOUND ENGLISH; A. D. 1250—(EARLY ENGLISH;  
1250—1350.)

7. *Dedication by the Author of the Ormulum to his  
Brother:—about 1250.*

Nu, brotherr Wallterr, brother min afterr the flaeshess  
kinde ;  
And brotherr min i Crisstenndom thurrr fullubht and  
thurrr throwwthe ;  
And brotherr min i Godess hus, yet o the thride wise,  
Thurrr thatt witt hafenn takenn ba an reghellboc to  
follghenn,  
Unnderr kanunnkess had and lif, swa summ Sannt  
Awwstin sette ;  
Icc hafe don swa summ thu badd, and fortheddte thin  
wille ;  
Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh goddspelless halghe  
lare,  
Afterr thatt little witt tatt me min Drihhten hafethth  
lenedd.

[Now, brother Walter, brother mine after the flesh's kind ;  
And brother mine in Christendom, through baptism and through  
truth (faith) ;  
And brother mine in God's house, yet in the third wise,  
Through (for) that we have taken both one rule-book to follow,  
Under (the) canon's rank and life so as Saint Austin ruled ;  
I have done so as thou badest, and furthered thy will (wish) ;  
I have turned into English [the] Gospel's holy lore,  
After that little wit that me my Lord hath lent.]

(*Craik.*)

8. *On the Typical Meaning of Unleavened Bread. In single lines according to the Oxford Edition of the Ormulum, by Robert Meadows White, D. D. Oxford, 1852. — 1st vol. p. 53, 1590–1605.*

Forr therrflinn<sup>1</sup> bræd iss clene bræd,  
 Forr that itt iss unnberrmedd,<sup>2</sup>  
 And itt bitacnethth clene lif,  
 And alle clene thæwess,<sup>3</sup>  
 And clene thohht, and clene word,  
 And alle clene dedess.  
 And giff thin heorrtē iss harrd and starre,  
 And stēdefasst o Criste  
 To tholenn<sup>4</sup> forr the lufe off himm  
 All that tatt is to dreghenn,<sup>5</sup>  
 Tha lakesst<sup>6</sup> tu thin Drihhtin<sup>7</sup> swa  
 Gastlike i thine thæwess,  
 Withth fasst<sup>8</sup> and findig<sup>9</sup> laf and harrd  
 Withthinnenn and withthutenn,  
 Swa thatt itt magg wel hellpenn the  
 To winnen Godess are.<sup>10</sup>

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9. *Proclamation of Henry III., A. D., 1258.*

What is commonly given as our earliest specimen of *English* (as distinguished from what is called *Semi-Saxon*) is a proclamation issued in 1258, in the name

<sup>1</sup> Unleavened.

<sup>2</sup> Unfermented.

<sup>3</sup> Services.

<sup>4</sup> To suffer.

<sup>5</sup> To be endured.

<sup>6</sup> Servest.

<sup>7</sup> Lord.

<sup>8</sup> Close.

<sup>9</sup> Firm.

<sup>10</sup> Favor.

of King Henry III., while under the control of the Council appointed at what is called "the mad parliament" of Oxford, of which the following is the copy addressed to the people of Huntingdonshire:—

"Henr' thurg godes fultume King on Engleneloande Lhoauerd on Yrloand Duk' on Norm' on Aquitain' and Eorl on Aniw, send igretinge to alle hise halde, ilaerde and ilaewed, on Huntendon' schir'

"Thaet witen ge wel alle thaet we willen and unnen thaet, thaet ure raedesmen alle other the moare dael of heom thaet beoth ichosen thurg us and thurg thaet loandes folk one ure kuneriche habbeth idon and schullen don in the worthnesse of gode, and on ure treowthe for the freme of the loande thurg the besigte of than to foreniseide redesmen beo stedefaest and ilestinde in alle thinge abuten aende.

"And we hoaten alle ure treowe in the treowthe thaet heo us ogen thaet heo stedefaesliche healden and swerien to healden and to werien the isetnesses thet beon imakede and beon to makien thurg than to foren iseide raedesmen other thurg the moare dael of heom alswo also hit is bi foren iseid.

"And thaet aehc other helpe thaet for to done bi than ilche othe agenes alle men rigt for to done and to foangen, and non ne mine of loand ne of egte, wherthurg this besigte muge beon ilet other iwersed on onie wise. And gif oni other onie cumen her ongenes we willen and hoaten thaet alle ure treowe heom healden deadliche ifoan.

"And for thaet we willen thaet this beo stedefaest and lestinde. We senden gew this writ open iseined with vre seel to halden amanges gew ine hord. Witanne usselvien aet Lunden', thane egtetenthe day on the monthe of Octobr' in the two and fowertighte yeare of ure cruninge."



[Henry, through God's help, King in England, Lord in Ireland, Duke in Normandy, in Aquitaine, and Earl in Anjou, sends greeting to all his subjects, learned and lay, in Huntingdonshire.

This know ye well all that we will and grant that that our counsellors, all or the more part of them, that be chosen through us and through the land's folk in our kingdom, have done and shall do, in the honor of God and in our truth (allegiance), for the good of the land, through the business (act) of those to-foresaid counsellors, be steadfast and lasting in all things but (without) end.

And we enjoin all our lieges, in the truth (allegiance) that they us owe, that they steadfastly hold, and swear to hold and to defend, the ordinances that be made and be to make through the to-foresaid counsellors, or through the more part of them, all so as it is before said.

And that each other help that for to do, by them [to] each other against all men right for to do and to promote. And none, nor of my land nor elsewhere, through this business may be let (hindered) or damaged in any wise. And if any man or any woman come them against, we will and enjoin that all our lieges them hold deadly foes.

And, for that we will that this be steadfast and lasting, we send you this writ open, signed with our seal, to hold amongst you in hoard (store). Witness ourselves at London, this eighteenth day in the month of October, in the two and fortieth year of our crowning.<sup>1</sup>]

<sup>1</sup> This proclamation was first printed by Somner, in his *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum*, fol. Oxon. 1659. In the Record Commission edition of *Rymer's Fœdera*, vol. i. (1816), p. 378, it is entitled, "Carta Regis in idiomate Anglico, ad singulos comitatus Angliæ et Hiberniæ super reformatione statûs regni per proceres ejusdem regni;" and is stated to be there given as transcribed from the original among the Patent Rolls in the Tower of London ("Pat. 43, Hen. III. m. 15, in Turr. Lond."). The present transcript, however, will be found, we believe, to be more correct than any hitherto published.

"This proclamation," Dr. Lingard observes, "is in both languages [English and French], the first of that description which has been preserved since the reign of Henry I., though I do not understand how such proclamations could have become known to the people unless they were published in the English language."—*Hist. Eng.* III. 125.

But this official paper can scarcely be safely quoted as exhibiting the current language of the time. Like all such documents, it is made up in great part of established phrases of form, many of which had probably become obsolete in ordinary speech and writing. The English of the proclamation of 1258 is much less modern than that of the *Ormulum*, and fully as near to the earlier form of the language, both in the words and in the grammar, as any part of Layamon's *Chronicle*, if not rather more so. — *Craik's outlines*, pp. 72–75.

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10. *From the beginning of a song against the King of Almaine. Reign of Henry III., near 1264. From Political Songs, edited by Wright, printed for the Camden Society: London, 1839. p. 69.*

1. Sitteth alle stille ant herkneth to me ;  
The Kyn of Alemaigne, bi mi leauté,<sup>1</sup>  
Thritti thousand pound askede he  
For te make the pees in the countré,  
'ant so he dude more.  
Richard thah thou be ever trichard <sup>2</sup>  
trichen shalt thou never more.
  
2. Richard of Alemaigne, whil that he wes kyng,  
He spende al is tresour opon swyvyng ;<sup>3</sup>  
Haveth he nout of Walingford o ferlyng ;<sup>4</sup>  
Let him habbe, ase he brew, bale to dryng,<sup>5</sup>  
maugre Wyndesore.  
Richard, thah thou be ever trichard  
trichen shalt thou never more.

<sup>1</sup> Loyalty.    <sup>2</sup> Traitor.    <sup>3</sup> Luxury.    <sup>4</sup> Furlong.    <sup>5</sup> Drink.

11. *The Commencement of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle  
as printed by Hearne : — about 1300.*

Engelond ys a wel god lond, ich wene of eche lond best,  
Yset in the ende of the world, as al in the West.  
The see goth hym al a boutē, he stont as an yle.  
Here fon heo durre the lasse dōute, but hit be thorw gyle  
Of fol of the selve lond, as me hath y seye wyle.  
From South to North he is long eighte hondred myle;  
And foure hondred myle brod from Est to West to  
wende,

Amydde tho lond as yt be, and noght as by the on ende.  
Plente me may in Engelond of alle gode y se,  
Bute folc yt for gulte other yeres the worse be.  
For Engelond ys ful ynow of fruyt and of tren,  
Of wodes and of parkes, that joye yt ys to sen;  
Of foules and of bestes, of wylde and tame al so;  
Of salt fysch and eche fresch, and fayre ryveres ther to;  
Of welles swete and colde ynow, of lesen and of mede;  
Of selver or and of gold, of tyn and of lede;  
Of stel, of yrn, and of bras; of god corn gret won  
Of whyte and of wolle god, betere ne may be non.

[England is a very good land, I ween of every land [the] best;  
set in the end of the world, as [being] wholly in the west. The  
sea goeth it all about; it standeth as an isle. Their foes they  
need the less fear, except it be through guile of folk of the same  
land, as one hath seen sometimes. From South to North it is  
long eight hundred mile; and four hundred mile broad from  
East to West to wend, amid the land as it be, and not as by the  
one end. Plenty one may in England of all good see, except  
(were it not for) folk that for guilt some years the worse be.  
For England is full enough of fruit and of trees; of woods and  
of parks, that joy it is to see; of fowls and of beasts, of wild and  
tame also; of salt fish and eke fresh, and fair rivers thereto; of

wells sweet and cold enow, of pasture and of mead; of silver ore and of gold, of tin and of lead; of steel, of iron, and of brass; of good corn great store; of wheat and of good wool, better may be none.] (Craik.)

12. *Beginning of a song on the execution of Sir Simon Fraser. Wright's edition as above, p. 212,—1306.*

Lystneth, lordynges, a new song ichulle<sup>1</sup> bigynne,  
Of the traytours of Scotlond that take beth wyth gynne;<sup>2</sup>  
Mon that loveth falsnesse and nule never blynne,<sup>3</sup>  
Sore may him drede the lyf that he is ynne,

ich understonde :

Selde wes he glad

That never nes a-sad

Of nythe<sup>4</sup> ant of onde.<sup>5</sup>

13. *Medical Recipes from Reliquiæ Antiquæ. From a MS. of the fourteenth century. Northern dialect.*

For hym that haves the squynansy : tak a fatte katte, and fla hit wele, and clene, and draw oute the guttes, and tak the grees of an urcheon, and the fatte of a bare, and resynes \* \* \* and sauge, and gumme of wodebynde, and virgyn wax; al this mye<sup>6</sup> smal, and farse<sup>7</sup> the catte within als thu farses a gos, rost hit hale, and geder the grees and enoynt hym tharwith. — p. 51.

For to make a woman's neke white and softe : tak fresch swynes grees molten, and hennes grees and the white of egges half roasted, and do thereto a lytel popyl mele, enoynt hir therwith ofte. — p. 53.

<sup>1</sup> I shall.

<sup>2</sup> Are taken in a trap.

<sup>3</sup> Will never leave it.

<sup>4</sup> Envy.

<sup>5</sup> Spite.

(The two last are according to Coleridge's Glossarial Index, rather than Wright's translation.)

<sup>6</sup> Pound.

<sup>7</sup> Stuff — Latin *Farcio*.

14. *The beginning and end of an Elegy on the death of Edward I. Probably written soon after his death, 1307. Wright's Political songs, pp. 246, 250.*

Alle that beoth of huerte trewe,  
 A stounde<sup>1</sup> herkneth to my song,  
 Of duel<sup>2</sup> that deth hath diht us newe,  
 That maketh me syke ant sorewe among;<sup>3</sup>  
 Of a knyght that wes so strong,  
 Of wham God hath don ys wille:  
 Me thuncketh that deth hath don us wrong,  
 That he so sone shall ligge still.

Thah mi tonge were mad of stel,  
 Ant min herte y-yote<sup>4</sup> of bras,  
 The godnesse myht y never telle  
 That with Kyng Edward was;  
 Kyng, as thou art cleped conquerour  
 In uch bataille thou hadest pris;  
 God bringe thi soule to the honour  
 That ever wes ant ever ys,  
 That lesteth ay withouten ende!  
 Bidde me God ant oure Ledy,  
 To thilke blisse Jesus us sende. AMEN.

15. *Robert de Brunne's Account of the Alteration of the Coinage by Edward I. in 1282, from his Translation of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle: — about 1340.*

Now turnes Edward ageyn to London his cite,  
 And wille wite certeyn<sup>5</sup> who schent<sup>6</sup> has his mone.

<sup>1</sup> Awbile.

<sup>2</sup> Grief — French.

<sup>3</sup> By turns.

<sup>4</sup> Made.

<sup>5</sup> Know certainly.

<sup>6</sup> Corrupted.

Of clippers, of roungers,<sup>1</sup> of suilk <sup>2</sup> takes he questis ;  
 Old used traitoures ilk at other hand kestis.  
 Ilk these other out said, ilk a schrewe other greves ; <sup>3</sup>  
 Of fele <sup>4</sup> were handes laid, and hanged ther as theves.  
 Edward did smyte <sup>5</sup> rounde peny, halfpeny, ferthing,  
 The croise <sup>6</sup> passed the bounde of alle thorghout the ryng.  
 The kyng's side salle be the hede and his name writen ;  
 The croyce side what cite it was in coyned and smyten.  
 The povere man ne the preste the peny prayses no thing.  
 Men gyf God the lest,<sup>7</sup> the fesse <sup>8</sup> him with a ferthing.  
 A thousand and two hundred and fourscore yeres mo,<sup>9</sup>  
 Of this mone men wondred first when it gan go.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nippers.<sup>2</sup> Such.

<sup>3</sup> *Ilk* and *ilk a* mean *every* with De Brunne, as they still do in the Scottish dialect; and *kestis* is *casts*; but, perhaps, scarcely more than a doubtful sense can be extracted from these two lines, as Hearne has printed them. His Glossary affords no aid towards their interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> Many.<sup>5</sup> Strike.

<sup>6</sup> Cross (the *oi* or *oy* being probably pronounced nearly as our *o* in the modern form of the word, or somewhat as the *oi* in the French *croix*).

<sup>7</sup> Least.<sup>8</sup> They feast.<sup>9</sup> More.

<sup>10</sup> From Hearne's Edition, 238, 239. — Of course the *e* makes a distinct syllable in such words as *cite* and *mone*.

IV. MIDDLE ENGLISH, A. D. 1350-1550.

(OLD ENGLISH.)

16. *Commencement of Minot's Poem on the Battle of Halidon Hill, fought A. D. 1333 : — about 1350.*

Trew king, that sittes in trone,  
Unto the I tell my tale,  
And unto the I bid a bone <sup>1</sup>  
For thou ert bute <sup>2</sup> of all my bale :  
Als thou made midelerd and the mone,<sup>3</sup>  
And bestes and fowles grete and smale,  
Unto me send thi socore sone,  
And dresce my dedes in this dale.<sup>4</sup>

(Craik.)

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17. *Commencement of the Vision of Piers Ploughman, from Wright's Edition, 1842 : — about 1360.*

In a somer seson  
Whan softe was the sonne,  
I shoop me into shroudes <sup>5</sup>  
As I a sheep <sup>6</sup> weere,  
In habite as an heremite  
Unholy of werkes,  
Went wide in this world  
Wondres to here ;  
Ac <sup>7</sup> on a May morwenynge

<sup>1</sup> Offer a prayer.

<sup>2</sup> Boot, remedy.

<sup>3</sup> As thou madest middle-earth and the moon.

<sup>4</sup> Direct my deeds in this vale (of misery).

<sup>5</sup> I put myself into clothes.

<sup>6</sup> Shepherd.

<sup>7</sup> And.

On Malverne hilles  
 Me befel a ferly,<sup>1</sup>  
 Of fairye me thoghte.  
 I was wery <sup>2</sup> for-wandred,  
 And went me to reste  
 Under a brood <sup>3</sup> bank  
 By a bournes syde ;  
 And as I lay and lenede,  
 And loked on the watres,  
 I slombred into a slepyng,  
 It sweyed so murye.<sup>4</sup>

( Craik. )

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18. *Other passages from Piers Ploughman to show the combination of verbs with pronouns, and the allusion to Robin Hood. 2d edition by Thomas Wright, 1856.*

“Lentestow <sup>5</sup> evere Lordes  
 For love of hire mayntenaunce ?”  
 “Ye, I have lent to Lordes,  
 Loved me nevere after,  
 And have y-maad many a knight,  
 Bothe mercer and draper,  
 That payed nevere for his prentishode  
 Noght a peire gloves.”  
 “Hastow <sup>6</sup> pité on povere men,  
 That mote nedes borwe ?”  
 “I have as much pité of povere men  
 As pedlere hath of cattes,  
 That wolde kille them, if he cacche hem myghte,  
 For coveitise of hir skynnes.”

<sup>1</sup> Wonder.<sup>2</sup> Weary.<sup>3</sup> Broad.<sup>4</sup> It sounded so pleasant.<sup>5</sup> Lendest thou.<sup>6</sup> Hast thou.



"Artow<sup>1</sup> manlich among thi neghebores .  
 Of thi mete and drynke?"  
 "I am holden," quod he, "as hende  
 As hound is in kichene,  
 Amonges my neghebores, namely,  
 Swiche a name ich have."

2977-2997.

If I sholde deye bi this day,  
 Me list nought to loke;  
 I kan noght parfitly my pater-noster,  
 As the preest it syngeth;  
 But I kan rymes of Robin Hood,  
 And Randolf erl of Chestre;  
 Ac neither of oure Lord ne of oure Lady  
 The leeste that evere was maked.

3273-3281.

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19. *Commencement of the Seventh Chapter of Sir John Mandevil's Travels, entitled "Of the Pilgrimages in Jerusalem, and of the Holy Places thereabout," from the Cotton MS. Titus, C. xvi., which is believed to have been written about the year 1400:—about 1370.*<sup>2</sup>

After for to speke of Jerusalem the holy cytee, ye schull undirstonde that it stont full faire betwene hilles, and there be no ryveres ne welles, but watar cometh by condyte from Ebron. And yee schulle understonde that Jerusalem of olde tyme, unto the tyme of Melchisedech, was cleped Jebus; and after it was clept Salem, unto the tyme of Kyng David, that put these two names to gider,

<sup>1</sup> Art thou.

<sup>2</sup> This text was first published in a contribution to the *Pictorial History of England* by Sir Henry Ellis.

and cleped it Jerosolome. And after that men cleped it Jerusalem, and so it is cleped yit. And aboute Jerusalem is the kyngdom of Surrye (*Syria*). And there besyde is the lond of Palestyne. And besyde it is Ascolon. And besyde that is the lond of Maritanie. But Jerusalem is in the lond of Judee; and it is clept Jude for that Judas Machabeus was kyng of that contree. And it marcheth estward to the kyngdom of Araby; on the south syde to the lond of Egipt; and on the west syde to the Grete See. On the north syde toward the kyngdom of Surrye, and to the see of Cypre.

(*Craik.*)

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20. *Mandevyl's book authorized by the Pope. Halliwell's Edition, reprinted from the edition of 1725, pp. 314, 315.*

And zee schulle undirstonde, zif it lyke zou, that at myn Hom comynge, I cam to Rome, and schewed my Lif to oure holy Fadir the Pope, and was assoylled of alle that lay in my Conscience, of many a dyverse grevous poynt: as men mosten nedes, that ben in company, dwellyng amonges so many a dyverse folk of dyverse Secte and of Beleewe, as I have ben. And amonges alle I schewed hym this Tretys that I had made afre informacioun of men, that knewen of thinges, that I had not seen my self; and also of Marveyles and Customes that I hadde seen my self; as fer as God wolde zeve me Grace: and besoughte his holy Fadirhode, that my Boke myghten be examyned and corrected be Avys of his wyse and discreet Conseille. And our holy Fadir, of his special grace, remytted my Boke to ben examyned and preved be the Avys of his seyd Conseille. Be the whiche, my Boke

was preeved for trewe ; in so moche that thei schewed me a Boke, that my Boke was examynde by, that comprehended fulle moche more, be an hundred part ; be the whiche, the *Mappa Mundi* was made after. And so my Boke (alle be it that many men ne list not to zeve credence to no thing, but to that that thei seen with hire Eye, ne be the Auctour ne the persone never so trewe) is afirmed and preved be our holy Fadir, in maner and forme as I have seyd.<sup>1</sup>

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21. *The fourth Psalm,—Wycliffite versions of the Scriptures, 1380.*<sup>2</sup>

*Earlier Version.*

Whan I inwardli clepide, ful out herde me the God of my rightwisnesse ; in tribulacioun thou spraddest out to me. Haue merci of me ; and full out here myn orisoun. Sones of men, hou longe with greuous herte ? Where to loue yee vanyte, and sechen lesing ? And witeth, for the Lord hath maad merueilous his seynt ; the Lord ful out shal here me, whan I shall crie to hym. Wrathe yee, and wileth not synnen ; that yee seyn in youre hertis and in youre couchis, have yee compunccioun. Sacrifiseth sacrificse of rightwisnesse, and hopeth in the Lord ; many seyn, who shewith to vs goode thingis ? Markid is vpon vs the light of thi chere, Lord ; thou geve glad-

<sup>1</sup> The spelling of this edition differs manifestly to some extent from the one cited by Craik. The greater number of capital letters may be due to the printer in 1725.

<sup>2</sup> According to the text published in *The Holy Bible . . . made from the Latin Vulgate, by John Wycliffe and his followers: Edited by the Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden, K. H.* 4 vols. 4to. Oxford, 1850.

nesse in myn herte. Of the frut of whete, win, and oile of hem; thei ben multiplied. In pes into itself; I shal slepe, and reste. For thou Lord; singulerli in hope hast togidere set me.

*Later Version.*

Whanne y inwardli clepid, God of my rightwisnesse herde me; in tribulacioun thou hast alargid to me. Haue thou mercy on me; and here thou my preier. Sones of men, how long ben ze of heuy herte? Whi louen ze vanite, and seken a leesying? and wite ze that the Lord hath maad merueilous his hooli man; the Lord schal here me whanne Y schal crye to hym. Be ze wrothe, and nyle ze do synne; and *for tho thingis* whiche ze seien in zoure hertis and in zoure beddis, be ze compunct. Sacrifie ze the sacrifice of rightfulnessse, and hope ze in the Lord; many seien, Who schewide goodis to vs? Lord, the light of thi cheer is markid on vs; thou hast zove gladnesse in myn herte. Thei ben multiplied of the fruit of whete, *and* of wyn; and of her oile. In pees in the same thing; Y schal slepe, and take reste. For thou, Lord; hast set me singulerli in hope.

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22. *Beginning of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the Versions ascribed to Wycliffe and his followers: — about 1380.*

*Earlier Version.*

Forsothe he seide also to his disciplis, Ther was sum riche man, that hadde a fermour, ether a baily; and this was defamyd anentis him, as he hadde wastid his goodis. And he clepide him, and seide to him, What heere I this

thing of thee? yeld resoun of thi ferme, for now thou schalt not mowe holde thi ferme. Forsoth the fermour seide with ynne him silf, What schal I do, for my lord takith away fro me the ferme? I may not delve, I am aschamyd to begge. I woot what I schal do, that, whanne I schal be removyd fro the ferme, thei receyve me in to her housis. And, alle the dettours of the lord clepid to gidere, he seide to the firste, Hou moche owist thou to my lord? And he seide to him, An hundrid barelis of oyle. And he seide to him, Taak thin obligacioun, and sitte soon, and wryt fyfti. Astirward he seide to another, Sothli hou moche owist thou? Which seide, An hundrid mesuris of whete. And he seide to him, Tak thi lettris, and wryt foure score. And the lord preiside the fermour of wickidnesse, for he hadde don prudently; for the sones of this world ben more prudent in her generacioun that the sones of light. And I seie to you, make to you frendes of the richesse of wickidnesse, that, whan ye shulen fayle, thei receyve you in to everlastynge tabernaclis.

The difference in the text of the two versions of the New Testament is much less than in the Old. The variations are not such as to show any marked progress in the language; sometimes even older forms occur in the later text, though the idiom is on the whole more in the modern style.

*Later Version.*

He seide also to hise disciples, Ther was a riche man, that hadde a baili; and this was defamed to him, as he hadde wastid his goodis. And he clepide hym and seide to hym, What here Y this thing of thee? yelde reckynyng of thi baili, for thou might not now be baili. And the baili seide with ynne him silf, What schal Y do, for my

lord takith awei fro me the baili? delfe mai Y not, I schame to begge. Y woot what Y schol do, that whanne Y am remeued fro the baili, thei resseyue me in to her hous. Therfor whanne alle the dettours of his lord weren clepid togider, he seide to the firste, How myche owist thou to my lord? and he seide, an hundrid barelis of oyle. And he seide to hym, take thi caucioun, and sitte soone, and write fifti. Aftirward he seide to another, and how myche owist thou? Which answerde, An hundrid coris of whete. And he seide to hym, Take thi lettris and write foure scoore. And the lord preiside the baili of wickydnese, for he hadde do prudentli; for the sones of this world ben more prudent in ther generacioun than the sones of light. And Y seie to you, make ye to you freendis of the ritchesse of wickidnesse, that whanne ye schulen fayle, thei resseyue you in to everlastyng tabernaclis.

The initial Saxon character, which in the second extract from the Psalms is printed *z*, is printed *y* in the above, as *you* instead of *zou*; and when it occurs in the middle of a word, *gh*, as in *light*. The actual sound was probably different from either, but at length passed over into these later forms.

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23. *Extract from a Sermon against Miracle-plays, from a MS. volume of English Sermons, written at the latter end of the fourteenth century. — Reliquiæ Antiquæ, p. 42.*

Here bigynnys a tretise of miraclis pleyinge. Know yee, Cristen men, that as Crist God and man is bothe weye, trewth, and lif, as seith the gospel of Jon, weye to the erryng, trewth to the unknowyng and doutyng, lif to the stryunge to hevene and weryyng, so Crist dude

nothinge to as but effectuely in weye of mercy, in trewth of ritwesnes, and in lif of yildying everlastyng joye for oure continuely morning and sorwyng in this valey of teeres. In myraclis, therefore, that Crist dude heere in erthe, outhur in hymself outhur in hise seyntis, weren so efectuel and in ernest done, that to synful men that erren thei broughten forgyvenesse of synne, settyng hem in the weye of right beleve; to doutouse men not stedefast, thei broughten in kunnyng to betere plesen God and verry hope in God to been stedefast in hym; and to the wery of the weye of God, for the grette penaunce and suffraunce of the trybulacioun that men moten have therinne, thei broughten in love of brynnynge charité, to the whiche alle thing is light, and he to suffere dethe, the whiche men most dreden, for the everlastyng lyf and joye that men moste loven and disiren, of the whiche thing verry hope puttith away alle werinesse heere in the weye of God.

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24. *From Trevisa's Translation of Higden's Polychronicon, Book I., chap. lix., as printed by Tyrwhitt in his edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, from MS. Harl. 1900 :— 1385.*

This apayringe (*disparaging*) of the birthe tongue is by cause of tweye thinges: oon is for children in scole, agenes the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytaught for to speke Frensche from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a childes

brooche. And uplondish men wol likne hem self to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of. — (TREVISIA.) This maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn (*murrain, plague*), and is siththe som del ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maistre of grammer, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and construction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche. So that now, the yere of our lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secund King Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of Englonde children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an (*in*) Englisch, and haveth therby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her gramer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do. Desavauntage is, that now children of gramer scole kunneth no more Frensch that can her lifte (*knows their left*) heele. And that is harm for hem, and thei schul (*an they shall*) passe the see and travaille in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentel men haveh now mych ylefte for to teche her children Frensch.

(*Craik.*)

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25. *Beginning of the Reeve's Tale, from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, after the Text in Wright's Edition, 1847: — about 1390.*

At Trompyngtoun, nat fer<sup>1</sup> fra Cantebrigge,  
 Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,  
 Upon the whiche brook then stant a melle;<sup>2</sup>  
 And this is verray sothe that I you telle.

<sup>1</sup> Not far.

<sup>2</sup> Stands a mill.



A meller was ther dwellyng many a day ;  
 As eny pecok he was prowde and gay ;  
 Pipen he coude, and fische, and nettys beete,<sup>1</sup>  
 And turne cuppes, wrastle wel, and scheete ;<sup>2</sup>  
 Ay by his belt he bar a long panade,<sup>3</sup>  
 And <sup>4</sup> of a swerd ful trenchaunt was the blade ;  
 A joly popper <sup>5</sup> bar he in his pouche ;  
 Ther was no man for perel durst him touche ;  
 A Scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose ;  
 Round was his face, and camois <sup>6</sup> was his nose ;  
 As pyled <sup>7</sup> as an ape was his skulle ;  
 He was a market-beter <sup>8</sup> at the fulle ;  
 Ther durste no wight hand upon him legge,<sup>9</sup>  
 That he ne swar anon he schuld abegge.<sup>10</sup>

( *Craik.* )

26. *From the Persones (Parson's) Tale in Chaucer's  
 Canterbury Tales, according to Wright's Edition :—  
 about 1390.*

A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde have bete his  
 disciple for his grete trespass, for which he was gretly  
 amoeved, and brought a yerde (*rod*) to scoure (*score*) the  
 child ; and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to  
 his maister, What thenke ye to do ? I wold bete the,  
 quod the maister, for thi correccioun. Forsothe, quod  
 the child, ye oughte first correcte youresilf, that han lost  
 al your pacience for the gilt of a child. Forsothe, quod  
 the maister al wepyng, thou saist soth ; have thou the  
 yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impa-  
 cience.

( *Craik.* )<sup>1</sup> Mend.<sup>2</sup> Shoot.<sup>3</sup> A kind of two-edged knife.<sup>4</sup> Should apparently be *As*.<sup>5</sup> Dagger.<sup>6</sup> Flat.<sup>7</sup> Peeled (bald).<sup>8</sup> A swaggerer in the market ?<sup>9</sup> Lay.<sup>10</sup> Suffer for.

27. *The Prayer of Chaucer, which concludes the Canterbury Tales. Wright's Edition, Vol. III., pp. 188, 189.*

Now pray I to yow all that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that likes hem, that therof thay thanke oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes; and if ther be any thing that displesith hem, I pray hem that thay arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen. Wherefore I biseke you mekely for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgive me my giltes, and namliche my translaciouns and of endityng in worldly vanitees, which I revoke in my retracciouns, as in the book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parlyment of briddes, the Tales of Canturbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if thay were in my mynde or remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy forgive me the synnes. But if the translacioun of Boece de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and Omelies, and moralities, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and all the seintes in heven bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfaccioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him

that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*<sup>1</sup>

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28. *From Weber's Metrical Romances. The Romance of Alisaunder, the beginning of Chapter VI. Vol. I, p. 43. Time, 1438. Lines 910-920.*

Clere and faire the somerys day spryng,  
 And makith mony departyng  
 Bytweone knyght and his swetyng.  
 Theo sunne ariseth, and fallith the dewyng;  
 Theo nessche clay hit makith clyng,  
 Mony is jolif in the mornyng,  
 And tholeth deth on the evenyng!  
 N' is in this world so siker thyng  
 So is deth, to olde and yyng!  
 The time is nygh of heore wendyng.

- From the Lyfe of Ipomydon. Vol. II. Lines 1-14.*

Mekely, lordynges, gentyll and fre,  
 Lysten awhile and herken to me:  
 I schall you telle of a kyng,  
 A dowghty man withowte lesyng;  
 In his tyme he was full bolde  
 A worthy man and well of tolde;  
 Feyre he was on fote and hand,

<sup>1</sup> Whether this is a genuine production of Chaucer, of which there is some doubt, or of some priest half penitent for the pleasure he had experienced in reading this great author, it belongs to the age, and may be regarded as written not far from the year 1400.

And well belouyd in all that lande ;  
 Off body he was styffe and stronge,  
 And to no man he wolde do wronge,  
 Of Poyle-lond lord was he :  
 Gold and sylver he had plenté ;  
 Hye and low louyd hym alle ;  
 Moche honoure to hym was falle.

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29. *From Lydgate's Poem entitled his Testament, according to Halliwell's Text, 1840 :— about 1450.*

During the tyme of this sesoun Ver,  
 I meene the sesoun of my yeerys greene,  
 Gynnyng fro childhood stretchith<sup>1</sup> up so fer  
 To the yeerys accountyd ful fiftene,  
 B' experience, as it was weel seene,  
 The gerisshe sesoun straunge of condiciouns  
 Disposyd to many unbridlyd passiouns ;

Voyd of resoun, yove to wilfulnesse,  
 Froward to vertu, of thrift gafe litil heede,  
 Loth to lerne, lovid no besynesse  
 Sauf pley or merthe, straunge to spelle or reede,  
 Folwyng al appetites longyng to childheede,  
 Lihtly tournyng, wylde and seelde sad,  
 Weepyng for nouhte and anoon afftir glad.

For litil wroth to stryve with my felawe,  
 As my passiouns did my bridil leede,  
 Of the yeerde somtyme I stood in awe ;

<sup>1</sup> This is the reading in *MS. Harl. 2255, fol. 60*. In *MS. Harl. 218, fol. 66*, it is *stretched*.

To be scooryd that was al my dreede ; —  
 Loth toward scole, lost my tyme indeede,  
 Lik a young colt that ran withowte brydil,  
 Made my freendys ther good to spend in ydil.  
 I hadde in custom to come to scole late,  
 Nat for to lerne, but for a contenaunce ; <sup>1</sup>  
 With my felawys reedy to debate,  
 In jangle and jape <sup>2</sup> was set al my pleasaunce ;  
 Wherof rebuked this was my chevisaunce, <sup>3</sup>  
 To forge a lesyng <sup>4</sup> and therupon to muse,  
 Whan I trespassyd mysilven to excuse.

To my bettre did no reverence,  
 Of my sovereyns gaf no fors at al, <sup>5</sup>  
 Wex obstynat by inobedience,  
 Ran into gardyns, applys ther I stal ;  
 To gadre frutys sparyd hegg nor wal ;  
 To plukke grapys in othir mennys vynes,  
 Was moor reedy than for to seyn matynes.

(*Craik.*)

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30. *From the Paston Letters written during the reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III. By John Fenn. Ramsay's Edition, London, 1849. Portion of a letter of Richard Calle to his betrothed mistress Margery Paston. 1469 — (Spelling modernized).*

Mine own lady and mistress, and before God very true wife, I with heart full sorrowful recommend me unto you, as he that cannot be merry, nor nought shall be till

<sup>1</sup> Appearance.

<sup>2</sup> Trick, jest.

<sup>3</sup> Contrivance.

<sup>4</sup> Lie.

<sup>5</sup> This line seems to be corrupted. Perhaps *sovereyns* should be *sufferance*.

it be otherwise with us than it is yet, for this life that we lead now is neither pleasure to God nor to the world, considering the great bond of matrimony that is made betwixt us, and also the great love that hath been and as I trust yet is betwixt us, and as on my part never greater; wherefore I beseech Almighty God comfort us as soon as it pleaseth him, for we that ought of very right to be most together are most asunder, meseemeth it is a thousand year ago since that I spake with you, I had lever (rather) than all the good in the world I might be with you; alas, alas! good lady, full little remember they what they do that keep us thus asunder, four times in the year are they accursed that hinder matrimony; it causeth many men to deem in them they have large conscience in other matters as well as herein; but what lady suffer as ye have done; and make you merry as ye can, for I wis, lady at the long way, God will of his righteousness help his servants that mean truly, and would live according to his laws, &c.

I understand, lady, ye have had as much sorrow for me as any gentlewoman hath had in the world, as would God all that sorrow that ye have rested upon me and that ye had been discharged of it, for I wis, lady, it is to me a death to hear that ye be entreated otherwise than ye ought to be; this is a painful life that we lead, I can not live thus without it be a displeasure to God. . . .

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31. *Conclusion of Caxton's English Translation of Higden's Polychronicon*: — 1482.

And here I make an ende of this lytel werke as nygh as I can fynde after the forme of the werk to fore made by Ranulph monk of Chestre. And where as ther is

fawte, I beseche them that shal rede it to correcte it. For yf I coude have founden moo storyes I wold have sette in hit moo; but the substaunce that I can fynde and knowe I have shortly sette hem in this book, to thentente that such thynges as have ben done syth the deth or ende of the sayd boke of Polycronycon shold be had in remembraunce and not putte in oblyvyon ne forgetyng; prayenge all them that shall see this symple werke to pardone me of my symple and rude wrytyng. Ended the second day of Juyll the xxii yere of the regne of Kyng Edward the Fourth, and of the Incarnacion of oure Lord a thousand four honderd foure score and tweyne.

Fynysshed per Caxton.

(*Craik.*)

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32. *Character of Richard the Third, by Sir Thomas More. From Holinshed's Chronicles, Vol. III., 4to., London, 1808, p. 362. From the Life of Edward the Fifth. Written 1513, Printed 1586.*

Richard the third sonne, of whome we now intreat, was in wit and courage equall with either of them, in bodie and prowesse farre vnder them both, litle of stature, ill featured of limmes, crooke backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard fauored of visage, and such as is in states called warlie, in other men otherwise; he was malicious, wrathfull, enuious, and from afore his birth euer froward. It is for truth reported, that the duchesse his mother had so much adoo in hir trauell, that she could not be delivered of him vncut; and that he came into the world with the feet forward, as men be borne outward, and (as the same runneth also) not vntoothed, whether men of hatred

report aboue the truth, or else that nature changed hir course in his beginning, which in the course of his life manie things vnnaturalie committed. So that the full confluence of these qualities, with the defects of fauour and amiable proportion, gave proof to this rule of physiognomie.

*Distortum vultum sequitur distorsio morum.*

None euill capteine was he in warre, as to which his disposition was more meetly than for peace. Sundrie victories had he and sometimes ouerthrowes; but neuer on default as for his owne person, either of hardiesse or politike order. Free was he called of dispense, and somewhat aboue his power liberall; with large gifts he gat him vnstedfast friendship, for which he was faine to pill and spoile in other places, and gat him stedfast hatred. He was close and secret, a deepe dissembler, lowlie of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardlie companiable where he inwardlie hated, not letting to kisse whome he thought to kill; despitious and cruell, not for euill will alway, but often for ambition, and either for the suretie or increase of his estate.

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33. *From the Prologue of Froissart. Lord Berners' Translation Reprinted from Pynson's Edition, of 1523 and 1525. 2 vols. 4to. London, 1812.*

To thentent that the honorable and noble aventures of featis of armes done and achyued by y<sup>e</sup> warres of Frāce and Inglande shulde notably be inregistered and put in perpetuall memory, whereby the prewe and hardy may have ensample to incourage them in theyr well doying, I syr Johā Froissart, wyll treat and recorde an hystory of great louage and preyse but, or I begyn, I re-



quire the sauour of all the worlde, who of nothyng created al thynges, that he wyll gyue me such grace and vnderstandyng, that I may cōtinue and perseuer in such wyse, that whoso this proces redeth or hereth, may take pastaūce, pleasure, and ensample. It is sayd of trouth, that al buyldynges are masoned and wroughte of dyuerse stones, and all great ryuers are gurged and assemblede of diuers surges and sprynges of water; in lykewyse all sciences are extraught and compiled of diuerse clerkes of that one wryteth, another, paraventure, is ignorant; but by the famous wryting of auncient auctours, all thyngis ben knowen in one place or other. Than to attayne to the mater that I have entreprised, I wyll begyn.

Fyrst, by the grace of God and of the blessed Virgyn, our Lady Saynt Mary, from whom all comfort and consolation procedeth, and wyll take my foundation out of y<sup>e</sup> true cronicles somtyme cōpyled by the right reuerend discrete, and sage maister, Johñ la Bele, sometyme chanon in Saint Lambartis, of Liege, who with good herte and due diligence dyd his true deuore in wrytyng this noble cronicle, and dyd contynue it all his lyfes dayes, in followyng the trouth as nere as he myght, to his great charge and coste in sekyng to haue the perfyght knowledge therof.

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34. *A Letter written by Sir Thomas More to his Wife after the Burning of his House at Chelsea, from his "Works," by Rastell, 1557: — 1528.*

Maistres Alyce, In my most harty wise I recommend me to you; and, whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron [*Jerome*] of the losse of our barnes and of our

neighbours also, with all the corn that was therein, albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is gret pitie of so much good corne lost, yet, sith it hath liked hym to sende us such a chaunce, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitacion. He sente us all that we have loste; and, sith he hath by such a chaunce taken it away againe, his pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge ther at, but take it in good worth, and hartely thank him, as well for adversetie as for prosperitie. And peradventure we have more cause to thank him for our losse then for our winning; for his wisdome better seeth what is good for us then we do our selves. Therefore I pray you be of good chere, and take all the howshold with you to church, and there thanke God, both for that he hath given us, and for that he hath taken from us, and for that he hath left us, which, if it please hym, he can encrease when he will. And, if it please hym to leave us yet lesse, at his pleasure be it.

I pray you to make some good ensearche what my poore neighbours have lost, and bid them take no thought therfore; for, and I shold not leave myself a sponse, there shal no pore neighbour of mine bere no losse by any chaunce happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God. And devise some what with your frendes, what waye wer best to take for provision to be made for corne for our household, and for sede thys yere comming, if ye thinke it good that we kepe the ground stil in our handes. And, whether ye think it good that we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk of our farme till we have somewhat advised us thereon. How beit, if we have more nowe then ye shall nede, and which can get them other mais-

ters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man were sodenly sent away he wote nere wether. . . .

(Craik.)

35. *Beginning of Tyndal's translation of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the second edition of his New Testament (as reprinted in the "English Hexapla," 1841); with the Variations, included within brackets, of the passage as given in his Treatise entitled "The Parable of the Wicked Mammon:" — 1534 and 1536.*

And he sayd also unto his disciples, Ther was a certayne rych [certain riche] man, which [the whiche] had a stewarde [steward] that was acused [y<sup>e</sup> was accused] unto him that [hym y<sup>e</sup>] he had wasted his goodes [goods]. And he called him, and sayd unto him, How is it that I heare [hear] thys of the? Give a comptes [acomptes] of thy steward shippe [steward shyp], for thou mayste [maiest] be no longer [my] stewarde. The stewarde [steward] sayd with in [within] him selfe, What shall I do [shal I doo]? for my master will [wil] take awaye [away] from me the stewarde shippe [my stewardshyp]. I cannot digge [dygge], and to begge I am a shamed [ashamed]. I woote [wot] what to do, that when [whan] I am put out of the stewardshippe [my stewardship], they may receave [receyve] me into their houses. Then called he all [al] his master's detters, and sayd [said] unto the fyrst [firste], How moche [muche] owest thou unto my master? And he sayd [said], An hondred [an c.] tonnes of oyle [oile]. And he sayd to [said unto] him, Take thy bill [byl], and syt donne [sit down] quick-

ly, and wryte fiftie [write L.] Then sayd he to another, What owest thou? And he sayde [sayd], An hondred [an c.] quarters of wheate [wheat]. He sayd to him [said unto hym], Take thy bill [byll] and write foure scoore [lxxx.]. And the lorde [lord] commended the unjust stewarde [steward], because he had done wysly [don wisely]. For the chyldren [children] of this worlde [thys world] are in their kynde wyser [kind wiser] then the chyldren [children] of lyght [light.] And I saye [say] also unto you, make you frendes [frindes] of the wiked Mammon, that, whan ye shall departe [shall have nede], they may receave [receyve] you into everlastinge [in everlasting] habitacions.

(*Craik.*)

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36. *Beginning of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the Version in what is called Cranmer's Bible (as reprinted in the "English Hexapla," 1841):— 1539.*

And he sayd also unto his discyples. Ther was a certayn rych man, whych had a stewarde, and the same was accused unto hym, that he had wasted hys goodes. And he called hym, and sayd unto hym: How is it that I heare this of the? Geve accomptes of thy stewardshyp: For thou mayste be no longer stewarde. The stewarde sayde wythin hym selfe: what shall I do? for my Master taketh awaye from me the stewarde-shyppe. I can not dygge, and to begge I am ashamed. I wote what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So whan he had called all hys masters detters together, he sayd unto the first: how moch owest thou unto my master? And he sayd: an hondred tonnes of oyle. And he sayd unto hym: take thy byll, and syt doune

quyckly and wryte fyftye. Then sayd he to another : how moch owest thou ? And he sayde : an hondred quarters of wheate. He sayd unto hym : Take thy byll, and wryte foure scoore. And the lorde commend-ed the unjust stewarde, because he had done wysly. For the chyldren of thys worlde are in their nacyon, wyser then the chyldren of lyght. And I saye unto you : make you frendes of the unryghteous mammon, that when ye shal have nede, they may receave you into everlastyng habitacyons.

(*Craik.*)

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37. *Sonnet by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey : — about 1545.*

The soote<sup>1</sup> season, that bud and bloom forth brings,  
 With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale ;  
 The nightingale with feathers new she sings ;  
 The turtle to her make<sup>2</sup> hath told her tale ;  
 Summer is come, for every spray now springs ;  
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale ;  
 The buck in brake his winter-coat he flings ;  
 The fishes fleet with new-repaired scale ;  
 The adder all her slough away she flings ;  
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale ;<sup>3</sup>  
 The busy bee her honey now she mings ;<sup>4</sup>  
 Winter is worn that was the flowers bale ;  
 And thus I see among these pleasant things  
 Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs !

(*Craik.*)

The spelling is modernized in this specimen.

<sup>1</sup> Sweet.

<sup>2</sup> Mate.

<sup>3</sup> Small.

<sup>4</sup> Mingles.

## V. MODERN ENGLISH:—FROM A. D. 1550.

38. *Beginning of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the Version in the Geneva New Testament (as reprinted in the "English Hexapla," 1841):—1557.*

And he sayd also unto his disciples, There was a certain riche man, which had a stewarde, and he was accused unto him, that he wasted his goodes. And he called hym, and said unto him, How is it that I heare this of thee? Geve acountes of thy stewardeshyp: for thou mayst be no longer stewarde. The stewarde sayd within him self, What shal I do, for my master wyl take away from me the stewardshyp? I can not dygge, and to begge I am ashamed. I wot what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardshyp they may receave me into their houses.

Then called he all his masters detters, and sayd unto the fyrst, How muche owest thou unto my master? And he sayd, An hundred mesures of oyle, and he sayed to him, Take thy obligation, and syt downe quickly, and wryte fyfty. Then sayed he to another, How muche owest thou? and he sayd, An hundred mesures of wheat. then he sayd to him, Take thyne obligation, and wryte foure score. And the Lord commended the unjust stewarde, because he had done wysely. Wherefore the chyl dren of this worlde are in their kynde wyser then the chyl dren of light. And I say unto you, Make you friendes with the riches of iniquitie, that when ye shal departe, they may receave you into everlasting habitations.

(*Craik.*)

39. *Commencement of Sackville's Induction to the Third Part of "The Mirror for Magistrates :"—1559.*

The wrathfull winter, proching <sup>1</sup> on apace,  
 With blustering blasts had all ybarde the treen,<sup>2</sup>  
 And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,  
 With chilling cold had pearst the tender greene ;  
 The mantles rent, wherein enwrapped beene  
 The gladsom groves that now lay ouerthrowne,  
 The tapets <sup>3</sup> torne and every blome downe blowne.

The soyle, that erst so seemly was to seene,  
 Was all despoyled of her beauties hewe ;  
 And soote-fresh flowers, wherewith the sommers queene  
 Had clad the earth, now Boreas blasts downe blew ;  
 And small foules, flocking, in theyr song did rewe  
 The winters wrath, wherewith ech thing defaste  
 In woefull wise bewayld the sommer past.

(Craik.)

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40. *From Ascham's "Schoolmaster :"—about 1563.*

Quick wits commonly be apt to take, unapt to keep ;  
 soon hot, and desirous of this and that ; as cold and soon  
 weary [as soon cold and weary?] of the same again ;  
 more quick to enter speedily than able to pierce far ;  
 even like over-sharp tools, whose edges be very soon  
 turned. Such wits delight themselves in easy and pleas-  
 ant studies, and never pass far forward in high and hard  
 sciences. And therefore the quickest wits commonly  
 may prove the best poets, but not the wisest orators ;  
 ready of tongue to speak boldly, not deep of judgment

<sup>1</sup> Approaching.

<sup>2</sup> Bared the trees.

<sup>3</sup> Hangings, leaves.

either for good counsel or wise writing. Also for manners and life, quick wits commonly be in desire new-fangled; in purpose unconstant; light to promise any thing; ready to forget every thing, both benefit and injury; and thereby neither fast to friend nor fearful to foe; inquisitive of every trifle; not secret in the greatest affairs; bold with any person; busy in every matter; soothing such as be present; nipping any that is absent; of nature, also, always flattering their betters, envying their equals, despising their inferiors; and, by quickness of wit, very quick and ready to like none so well as themselves.

(*Craik.*)

The spelling is modernized in this specimen.

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41. *From the "Schole Master," Roger Ascham:—Reprinted in 4to. London, 1761. pp. 243, 244. 1571.*

Take hede therefore, ye great ones in the court, yea though ye be the greatest of all, take hede what ye do; take heed how ye live: for as you great ones use to do, so all meane men love to do. You be indeed makers or marrers, of all mens maners within the realme. For though God hath placed you to be chief in making of lawes, to beare greatest authoritee, to commend all others; yet God doth order that all your lawes, all your authority, all your commandmentes, do not half so moch with meane men, as doth your example and maner of living. And for example, even in the greatest matter, if you yourselves do serve God gladlie and orderlie for conscience sake, not coldlie, and somtyme for maner sake, you carie all the court with you, and the whole realm beside, earnestlie and orderlie to do the same. If you do



otherwise, you be the onlie authors of all misorders in religion, not onlie to the courte, but to all *Englande* beside. Infinite shall be made cold in religion by your example, that never were hurt by reading of books. . . .

What praise shold they wyne to themselves, what commoditie shold they bring to their contrie, that would thus deserve to be pointed at; "Behold there goeth the author of good order, the guide of good men"? I could say more, and yet not over moch. But perchance some will say, I have stepte to farre out of my schole into the commonwelthe.

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42. *From Sir Philip Sidney's "Apologie for Poetrie:"—  
about 1580.*

The Philosopher, therefore, and the Historian are they which would win the goale; the one by precept, the other by example. But both, not having both, do both halte. For the Philosopher, setting downe with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of utterance, and so mistie to bee conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall wade in him till hee be olde before he shall finde sufficient cause to bee honest: for his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and generall, that happie is that man who may understande him, and more happie that can applye what hee dooth understand. On the other side, the Historian, wanting the precept, is so tyed, not to what shoulde bee, but to what is, to the particuler truth of things, and not to the generall reason of things, that hys example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a lesse fruitful doctrine.

Now dooth the peereless Poet performe both; for, whatsoever the philosopher sayth should be doone, hee

giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom hee presupposeth it was doone ; so as he coupleth the generall notion with the particuler example. A perfect picture, I say ; for he yeeldeth to the powers of the minde an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordish description, which dooth neyther strike, pierce, nor possesse the sight of the soule so much as that other dooth. For as, in outward things, to a man that had never seene an elephant or a rinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all theyr shapes, cullour, bignesse, and particular markes, or, of a gorgeous pallace the architecture, with declaring the full beauties might well make the hearer able to repeate, as it were, by rote all hee had heard, yet should never satisfie his inward conceit with being witnes to it selfe of a truly lively knowledge ; but the same man, as soone as hee might see those beasts well painted, or the house wel in modell, should straightwaies grow, without need of any discription, to a judiciall comprehending of them ; so no doubt the philosopher, with his learned definition, bee it of virtue, vices, matters of publick policie, or privat government, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom ; which, notwithstanding, lye darke before the imaginative and judging powre, if they bee not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of Poesie.

(Craik.)

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43. *Beginning of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the version in the Rheims New Testament (as reprinted in the "English Hexapla") :—1582.*

And he said also to his Disciples, There was a certaine riche man that had a bailife : and he was il reported of

unto him, as he that had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him, What heare I this of thee? render account of thy bailship: for now thou canst no more be bailife. And the bailife said within him self, What shal I doe, because my lord taketh away from me the bailship? digge I am not able, to begge I am ashamed. I know what I wil doe, that when I shal be removed from the bailship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lords detters, he said to the first, How much doest thou owe my lord? But he saith, An hundred pipes of oile. And he said to him, Take thy bil: and sit downe, quickly write fiftie. After that he said to an other, But thou, how much doest thou owe? Who said, An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him, Take thy bil, and write eightie. And the lord praised the bailife of iniquitie, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world, are wiser then the children of light in their generation. And I say to you, Make unto you frendes of the mammon of iniquitie: that when you faile, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

(Crail.)

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44. *From a Discourse of English Poetrie by William Webbe, London, 1586, Reprinted in "Ancient Critical Essays" by Joseph Haslewood, London, 1815. Vol. II. pp. 32, 33.*

The first of our English Poets that I have heard of, was Iohn Gower, about the time of King Rychard the seconde, as it should seeme by certayne coniectures bothe a Knight, and questionlesse a singuler well learned man; whose workes I could wysh they were all whole and per-

fect among us, for no doubt they contained very much deepe knowledge and delight ; which may be gathered by his freend Chawcer, who speaketh of him oftentimes in diuer places of hys workes. Chawcer, who for that excellent fame which hee obtayned in his Poetry, was always accounted the God of English Poets (such a tytle for honours sake hath beene given him) was next after, if not equall in time to Gower ; and hath left many workes, both for delight and profitable knowledge, farre exceeding any other that as yet euer since hys time directed theyr studies that way. Though the manner of his stile may seeme blunt and course to many fine English eares at these dayes, yet in truth, if, it be equally pondered, and with good iudgment aduised, and confirmed with the time wherein he wrote, a man shall perceiue thereby euen a true picture, a perfect shape of a right Poet. He by his delightsome vayne, so gulled the eares of men with his deuises, that, although corruption bear such sway in most matters, that learning and truth might skant bee admitted to shewe itself, yet without controuersie, myght hee gyrd at the vices and abuses of all states, and gawle with very sharpe and eger inventions, which he did so learnedly and pleasantly, that none therefore would call him into question. For such was his bolde spyrit, that what enormities he saw in any, he would not spare to pay them home, eyther in playne words or els in some prety and pleasaunt couert, that the simplest might espy him.

45. *The Reply of Belpheobe to Braggadocio, in the Third Canto of the Second Book of Spenser's "Faerie Queene :"* — about 1590.

"Whoso in pompe of prowde estate," quoth she,  
 "Does swim, and bathes himselfe in courtly blis,  
 Does waste his daies in dark obscuritee,  
 And in oblivion ever buried is :  
 Where ease abownds yt's eath<sup>1</sup> to do amis :  
 But who his limbs with labours, and his mynd  
 Behaves<sup>2</sup> with cares, cannot so easy mis.  
 Abroad in armes, at home in studious kynd,  
 Who seekes with painfull toile shall Honor soonest fynd.

"In woods, in waves, in warres she wents to dwell,  
 And wil be found with perill and with paine ;  
 Ne can the man that moulds in ydle cell  
 Unto her happy mansion attaine ;  
 Before her gate High God did Sweate ordaine  
 And wakefull Watches ever to abide :  
 But easy is the way and passage plaine  
 To Pleasures pallace : it may soone be spide,  
 And day and night her dores to all stand open wide."  
(Craik.)

46. *From an Apologie of Poetrie by Sir John Harington, 1591. — Reprinted by Haslewood, Essays, Vol. II. p. 142.*

*Sir Thomas Moore* a man of great wisdom & learning, but yet a little enclined (as good wits are many times) to scoffing, when one had brought him a booke of some shallow discourse, and preessed him very hard to have

<sup>1</sup> Easy.

<sup>2</sup> Employs, occupies.

his opinion of it, aduised the partie to put it into verse ; the plaine meaning man in the best maner he could did so, and a twelve-month after at the least, came with it to *Sir Thomas*, who slightly perusing it, gave it this *encomiū*, that now there was rime in it, but afore it had neither rime nor reason. If any *mā* had ment to serve me so, yet I haue preuented him ; for sure I am he shall find rime in mine, and if he be not voyd of reason, he shall find reason to. Though for the matter, I can challenge no praise, hauing but borrowed it, and for the verse I do challenge none, being a thing that euerybody that neuer scarce bayted their horse at the University take upon them to make.

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47. *Description of the Irish Mantle, from Spenser's "View of the State of Ireland : " — about 1595.*

It is a fit house for an out-law, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloke for a thiefe. First, the out-law, being for his many crimes and villanyes banished from the townes and houses of honest men, and wandring in waste places, far from danger of law, maketh his mantle his house, and under it covereth himselfe from the wrath of heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men. When it raineth it is his pent-house ; when it bloweth it is his tent ; when it freezeth it is his tabernacle. In summer he can wear it loose, in winter he can wrap it close ; at all times he can use it ; never heavy, never cumbersome. Likewise, for a rebell it is as serviceable. For in his warre that he maketh (if at least it deserves the name of warre), when he still flyeth from his foe, and lurketh in the thicke woods and strait passages, waiting for advantages, it is his bed, yea and

almost his household stuff. For the wood is his house against all weathers, and his mantle is his couch to sleep in. Therein he wrappeth himself round, and coucheth himselfe strongly against the gnats, which in that country doe more annoy the naked rebels whilst they keepe the woods, and doe more sharply wound them, than all their enemies swords or spears, which can seldome come nigh them. Yea and oftentimes their mantle serveth them, when they are neere driven, being wrapped about their left arme, instead of a target, for it is hard to cut thorough with a sword; besides, it is light to beare, light to throw away; and, being, as they commonly are, naked, it is to them all in all. Lastly, for a theife it is so handsome, as it may seem it was first invented for him; for under it he may cleanly convey any fit pil-lage that commeth handsomely in his way, and when he goeth abroad in the night in free-booting it is his best and surest friend; for, lying, as they often do, two or three nights together abroad to watch for their booty, with that they can prettily shroud themselves under a bush or bank side till they may conveniently do their errand; and when all is over he can in his mantle passe through any town or company, being close hooded over his head, as he useth, from knowledge of any to whom he is indangered. . . .

(*Craik.*)

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48. *Bacon's Essays. Edition of 1597. Reprinted in American Edition, 1860. Vol. XII. pp. 291, 292.*

#### OF STUDIES.

Studies serue for pastimes, for ornaments and for abilities. Their chiefe use for pastime is in priuateness and

retiring; for ornamente is in discourse, and for abilitie is in iudgement. For expert men can execute, but learned men are fittest to iudge or censure.

To spend too much time in them is slouth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make iudgement wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholler. They perfect *Nature*, and are perfected by experience. Craftie men contemne them, simple men admire them, wise men use them: for they teach not their owne vse, but that is a wisdom without them; and aboue them wonne by observation. Read not to contradict, nor to belieue, but to waigh and consider. Some bookes are to be tasted, others to bee swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: That is, some bookes are to be read only in partes; others to be read, but cursorily, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man, conference a readye man, and writing an exacte man. And therefore, if a man write little he had neede haue a great memorie, if he conferre little, he had neede haue a present wit, and if he reade little, he had neede haue much cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets wittie; the mathematics subtle; naturall Phylosophie deepe: morall graue; Logicke and Rhetoricke able to contend.

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49. *Beginning of the 16th Chapter of St. Luke, from the Authorized Version (as given in the "English Hexapla")* :—1611.

And hee said also unto his disciples, There was a certaine rich man which had a Steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he



called him, and said unto him, How is it that I heare this of thee? Give an accompt of thy stewardship: for thou mayest bee no longer Steward. Then the Steward said within himselfe, What shall I doe, for my lord taketh away from mee the Stewardship? I cannot digge, to begge I am ashamed. I am resolved what to doe, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So hee called every one of his lords detters unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And hee said an hundred measures of oyle. And hee said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit downe quickly, and write fiftie. Then saide hee to another, And how much owest thou? And hee said, An hundred measures of wheat. And hee saide unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourescore. And the lord commended the unjust Steward, because hee had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser then the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to your selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousnesse, that when ye faile, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

(*Craik.*)

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50. *From Hooker's "Ecclesiasticall Politie." Book I. § 7.*  
*Works, Fol. London, 1617.*

By reason man attaineth vnto the knowledge of things that are and are not sensible. It resteth therefore that wee search how man attaineth vnto the knowledge of such things vnsensible, as are to be known that they may be done. Seeing then that nothing can moue vnless there be some end, the desire whereof prouoketh vnto motion; how should that diuine power of the Soule, that *Spirit of our mind*, as the Apostle termeth it, euer stir itselfe unto action, vnlesse it haue the like spurre? The end for

which we are moued to worke is sometimes the goodnesse which we conceiue of the very working itselfe, without any further respect at all; and the cause that procureth action is the meere desire of action, no other good besides being thereby intended. Of certain turbulent wits it is said *Illis quieta movere magna merces videbatur*. They thought the verie disturbance of things established, an hire sufficient to set them on to worke. Sometimes that which we doe is referred to a further end, without the desire whereof we should leave the same undone, as in their Actions that gave Almes to purchase thereby the prayse of men. Man in perfection of nature being made according to the likeness of his Maker, resembleth him also in the manner of working; so that whatsoever we worke as men, the same we doe wittingly worke and frely; neither are we according to the manner of naturall agents any way so tyed, but that it is in our power to leave the things we doe undone.

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51. *From the Preface to the "Ephemeris Parliamentaria."*  
*Fol. London, 1654.*

One of the most lawfull wayes whereby man in some sort may be said to *revenge himself of the shortnesse of his life*, and extend the measure thereof to a larger proportion then nature allowes him is by the *studie of Historie*. For *Historie is the remembrancer of the time past*, it is the monument generall erected over actions long since dead and interred, acquainting such as read the Epitaph thereon with the most remarkable passages of the ages past; so that a *Dwarf* by the advantage of the ascent of History, may suddenly start up (if not a *Giant*) one of competent stature to oversee all transactions long before him.

But of all Histories none is more pleasant or profitable then those of our *Native Country*, which, as it is an *Island*, and so a little entire world in it self, hath in all ages afforded as many *signall observables* as any content of ground of the same proportion, neither *Greece* nor *Italie* it selfe excepted, which indeed overmatch us not in *Histories*, but in *Historians*. Otherwise if *workmen* might be had, as fair an Edifice might be erected of English affaires, such the plenty and curiosity of materials concurring thereunto.

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52. From "*Boyer's History of William III.*" Vol. I, p.  
114. London, 1703.

Not long after the world was astonish'd to hear that the *French King* had entirely abandon'd *Messina* and all *Sicily*. Some ascribed it to meer Necessity, and others to a Design of pursuing the Conquest of *Flanders* with redoubled vigour and application. Howsoever it was, the Parliament of *England* were of this last opinion; and therefore to stop his career they petitioned the King to Declare open War against him, and granted His Majesty a Poll-Bill, Prohibiting by the same Act the Importation of all *French Commodities*. King *Charles*, who was now desirous to enter into a League with the Empire, *Spain*, and the United Provinces, would oblige them to make the same Prohibition in relation to *French Goods*; but while the *Hollanders* were demurring upon the last Point, believing that such a Prohibition would ruin their Trade, an unexpected Accident fell out that chang'd the whole Scene of Affaires.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The change in orthography since the time of the preceding extract is worthy of notice. See more on this point at the close of the next.

53. *From Sir William's Temple Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning. Works. Fol. London, 1740. Vol. I, p. 151.*

Whoever converses much among the old Books, will be something hard to please among the New ; yet these must have their Part too in the Leisure of an idle Man, and have many of them their Beauties as well as their Defaults. Those of Story, or Relations of Matters of Fact, have a value from their substance as much as from their Form ; and the Variety of Events is seldom without Entertainment or Instruction how indifferently soever the Tale is told. Other Sorts of Writings have little of Esteem, but what they receive from the Wit, Learning, or Genius of the Authors, and are seldom met with of any Excellency, because they do but trace over the Paths that have been beaten by the Ancients, or Comment, Critick and Flourish upon them ; and are at best but copies after those Originals, unless upon Subjects never touched by them, such as are all that relate to the different Constitutions of Religions, Laws, or Governments in several Countries, with all Matters of Controversy that arise upon them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The orthography here with the exception of a single word (Critick) is the same as now in use, save that the nouns begin with a capital letter, and the same honor is extended to emphatic verbs, as *Comment*, *Critick*, and *Flourish*. This author illustrates the largest use of capital letters, unless the use be due to the caprice of the printer. Many authors or printers employed them to mark the more emphatic words, and some never differed much in this respect from the generally received usage of the present day. The works of Milton reprinted at London in 1753, and the works of Bolingbroke published in 1754, agree with the modern style. It was during the first half of the last century that capitals were used most freely, somewhat after the manner of our kinsmen, the Germans.

## LETTERS.

*Original Letters*<sup>1</sup> of persons of high rank at different periods. — From Ellis' *Letters illustrative of English History*.

## I.

*Richard, Earl of Cambridge, to King Henry the Fifth, suing for mercy after his condemnation. Second Series, Vol. I. p. 48. 1415.*

Myn most dredfull and sovereyne lege Lord, i Richard York zowre humble subgyt and very lege man, beseke zou of Grace of al maner offenses wych y haue done or

<sup>1</sup> The orthography of these letters will show the usage, or lack of usage, of the first classes in society, when as yet there was no settled standard. It is only since the publication of Johnson's Dictionary, and the higher esteem in which literary men are held, that much importance has been attached to this essential to a good education. The following passage from Macaulay's Essays will serve as authority on the subject (he is speaking of Lord Bute):—"It is said that his spelling was incorrect. But though in our time incorrect spelling is justly considered as a proof of sordid ignorance, it would be unjust to apply the same rule to people who lived a century ago. The novel of Sir Charles Grandison was published about the time at which Lord Bute made his appearance at Leicester House. Our readers may perhaps remember the account which Charlotte Grandison gives of her two lovers. One of them, a fashionable baronet, who talks French and Italian fluently, cannot write a line in his own language without some sin against orthography; the other, who is represented as a most respectable specimen of the young aristocracy, and something of a virtuoso, is described as spelling pretty well for a lord."—*Essays* vi. p. 19, (Sheldon's Amer. ed.)

assentyd to in heuy kynde, by steryng of odyr folke egging me yer to, where in y wote wel i have hyll offendyd to zowre Hynesse ; besechyng zow at the reverence of God yat zow lyke to take me in to the handys of zowre mercyfulle and pytouse graace, thenkyng zee wel of zowre gret goodnesse. My lege Lord, my fulle trust is yat zee wylle have consyderacyoun, thaught<sup>1</sup> yat myn persone be of none walwe, zowre hye goodnesse wher God hath sette zow in so hye estat to every lege man yat to zow longyth plenteously to geve grace, yat zow lyke to accept, zys myn symple request for ye love of oure lady and of ye blysfulle Holy Gost, to whom I pray yat yey<sup>2</sup> mot zowre hert enduce to al pyte and grace for yeyre<sup>3</sup> hye goodnesse.

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## II.

*King Richard the Third to his mother, the Duchess of York.* — 1484. — *Ellis, Second Series, Vol. I, p. 161.*

Madam I recomende me to you as hertely as is to me possible ; beseching you in my most humble and effectuose wise of your daly blissing to my synguler comfort and defence in my nede. And, Madam, I hertily beseche you that I may often here from you to my comfort, and suche newes as ben here my servent Thomas Bryan this berer shall showe you ; to whome please it you to yeve credence unto. And, Madam, I beseche you to be good and graciouse lady to my lord my Chamberleyn to be your officer in Wilshire in such as Colingbourne had. I trust he shall therein do you good service, and that it please you that by this berer I may understande youre pleasur

<sup>1</sup> Though.<sup>2</sup> They.<sup>3</sup> Their.

in this behalve. And I pray God sende you th' accomplishment of your noble desires. Written at Poinete-freit, the iij<sup>d</sup> day of Juyn, with the hande of

Yo<sup>r</sup> most humble son,

RICARDUS REX.

### III.

*Lady Brian, Governess of the Lady Elizabeth, (afterwards Queen), to Lord Cromwell, for instructions, after the death of Queen Anne, her mother. — 1536. Ellis. Second Series, Vol. II., pp. 81, 82.*

#### EXTRACTS.

Now et es so, my Lady Elizabethe is put from that degre she was afore; and what degre she is at now, I know not bot by be hering say; therfor I know not how to order her, nor myself, nor (non) of hars that I have the rewl of; that is her women & har gromes: besychyng you to be good Lord to my Lady & to al hers; and that she may haue som rayment; for she hath neither gown nor kertel, nor petecot, nor no maner of linnin for smokes, nor cerchefes nor sleves, nor rayls, nor bodystychets, nor handcerchers, nor mofelers, nor be-gems.

God knoweth, my Lady hath great pain with her great teeth, & they come very slowly forth; & causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her wil more than I would; I trust to God & her teeth were well graft, to have her Grace after another fashion, than she is yet: so as I trust the Kings grace shal have great comfort in her Grace. For she is as toward a Child, & as gentle

of conditions, as ever I knew ene in my leyf. Jesu preserve her Grace. As for a Day or two at a hey teym, or whan som ever it shal please the Kings Grace to have set abrod, I trost so to indever me, that shee shal so do as shal be to the Kings honeur, and hers ; and than after to take her ease again. . . .

To the ryht nobel, & my syngeler good Lord  
My Lord Prive Sel, be thys delyverd.

## IV.

*Minute of a Letter from Queen Elizabeth to the Queen of Scots, Feb. 1st, 1571. Ellis, Second Series, Vol. III. pp. 1, 2.*

Madame : Of late time I have receaved divers letters from yow, to the which you maie well gesse, by the accidentes of the time, whie I have not made anie answer ; but speciallie because I saw no matter in them that required any such answer as could have contented yow, and to have discontented yow had bin but an increase of your impatience, which I thought tyme would have mitigated as it doth commonlie where the cause thereof is not truelie grounded, and that it be so understand ; but now findinge by your last letter the 27th of the last, an increase of your impatience tending allsoe to manie uncomlie, passionate, and vindicative speeches, I thought to change my former opinion, and by patient and advised wordes to move yow to staie, or ells to qualifie your passions, and to consider that it is not the manner to obtain good things with evill speeches, nor benefitts with injurious chalenges, nor to gett good to yourself with doing evill to another. . . .



Wishing to you the same grace of God that I wish to myself, and that he maie direct you to desire and attaine to that which is meete for his honnor and your quietnes, with contacioun both of bodie and minde. Given at my Pallace of Westminster the first daie of February, 1571.

Your Cosin that wisheth  
you a better mynde.

---

## V.

*Thomas Lorkin to Mr. Adam Newton, the Tutor of Prince Henry, detailing the manner in which a young English Gentleman completed his education at Paris in 1600. Ellis, Second Series, Vol. III., p. 221.*

Syr

The chief errand of my last letters was to let you understand of our safe comming hither. These will give you an account of our tyme spent here. Our days therefore are thus divided. In the forenoone Mr. Puckering spends two houres on horsebacke ; from seven to nine one morning, from nine to eleven another. Two other houres he spends in French ; one in reading, the other in rendering to his teacher some part of a Latine authour by word of mouth. A fifth hour is employed in learning to handle his weapon which entertains him till twelve of the clock, when the bell warns him to dinner, where the company continues together till Two o'clock, either passing the time in discourse, or some honest recreation pertheyning to armes. Then they are warned by the bell to dauncing which houlds him till Three, when he retyres himself into his chamber, and there employs with me two other hours

in reading over some Latin author ; which done he translates some little part of it into French, leaving his faults to be corrected the morrow following by his teacher. After supper we take a brief survey of all. . . .

Your most humbly devoted  
in all duty and service,

THOMAS LORKIN.

Paris this 6 of Novemb.

Stilo novo.

To the honor<sup>able</sup> Mr. Adam Newton  
at the Princes Court in England.

## VI.

*Lord Bacon on his Impeachment. Ellis. Second  
Series, Vol. III. p. 235: — 1620.*

My verie good Lords

I humbly praye your Lordships to make a favourable and true construction of my absence. It ys noe fayninge nor fayntinge, but sicknes both of my harte and of my backe ; though joyned with that comfort of my mynde that persuadeth me that I am not farre from heaven, whereof I feele the first fruites. And because, whether I lyve or dye, I would be glad to preserve my honor and fame, as farre as I am worthye hearinge that some complayntes of base Bryberye are come before your Lordships, my requests to your Lordships are ; First, that you will mayntayne me in your good opynion without prejudice untill my cause be hearde ; Secondlye, that in regard I have sequestred my mynde at this tyme in great part from worldlye matters, thinkinge of my accompt and answeere in a

higher Court, your Lordships would geve me some convenient tyme accordinge to the course of other Courtes to advise with my counsell, and to make my answer; wherein neverthelesse my counsells part wilbe the lest, for I shall not by the grace of God trick up an innocencye with cavillacions, but playnlye and ingenuouslye (as your Lordships know my maner ys) declare what I knowe or remember; Thyrdlye, that accordinge to the course of Justice, I may be allowed to except to the witness brought against me, and to move questions to your Lordships for their crosse examinacions; and likewise to produce my owne witnesses for discoverye of the truthe; and Lastlye, if their come anye more petitions of like nature, that your Lordships would be pleased not to take anye prejudice or apprehension of anye number or muster of them against a Judge that makes two thousand Decrees and Orders in a yeaere; not to speake of courses that have bene taken for huntinge out complayntes against me; but that I may answere them accordinge to the rules of Justice severallye and respectivelye.

These requests I hope to appeare to your Lordships no other then just. And soe thinkinge my selfe happye to have soe noble Peers and reverende Prelates to discerne of my cause, and desyringe that noe priviledge of greatnes for subterfuge of guiltynes, but meane (as I sayd) to deale fayrlye and playnlye with your Lordships, and to put my selfe upon your honors and favours, I pray God to blesse your Counsells and your persons; and rest

Your Lordships humble servaunt,

9 Martij, 1620.

Fr. St. Alban, *Canc.*

To the right ho. his verie good  
Lords the Lords Spyrituall and  
Temporall, in the Upper House of  
Parliament assembled.

## VII.

*Cromwell to the Lady Elizabeth his wife : — 1651.*

My dearest,

I could not satisfie my selfe to omit this poast, although I have not much to write, yett indeed I love to write to my Deere whoe is very much in my heart. It joyes mee to heere thy soule prospereth; the Lord increase his favors to thee more and more. The great good thy soule can wish is that the Lord lift upon [thee] the light of his countenance which is better then life. The Lord blesse all thy good counsell and example to those about thee, and heere all thy prayers, and accept thee alwayes. I am glad to heere thy Sonn and Daughter are with thee. I hope thou wilt have some good opportunitye of good advise to him. Present my duty to my Mother, and my love to all the familye. Still pray for

Edenburgh

thine

3d of May 1651

O Cromwell.

For my beloved wife Elizabeth

Cromwell att the Cockpitt in Westminster, theise.

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